

Friday December 27 1996

Abu Dhabi D 8.50	Greece D 4.00	Hong Kong HK 15
Albania L 2.00	Hong Kong HK 25	India IN 15.00
Andorra FF 10	India IN 15.00	Indonesia ID 15.00
Australia AU 10	Indonesia ID 15.00	Iran IR 15.00
Austria S 13.50	Iran IR 15.00	Italy I 3.00
Belgium BF 65	Italy I 3.00	Japan JP 15.00
Bulgaria LV 500	Japan JP 15.00	Korea KR 15.00
Canada C\$ 3.50	Korea KR 15.00	Latvia LV 2.00
Czechia CZ 20	Latvia LV 2.00	Lithuania LT 2.00
Czechia SKK 20	Lithuania LT 2.00	Malaysia M 3.00
Denmark DK 15	Malaysia M 3.00	Malta M 2.00
Dubai D 8.50	Malta M 2.00	Netherlands G 4.00
Egypt EG 6.50	Netherlands G 4.00	New Zealand NZ 15.00
Finland F 10	New Zealand NZ 15.00	Norway N 15.00
France FF 10	Norway N 15.00	Poland P 15.00
Germany DM 3.50	Poland P 15.00	Portugal P 20.00
	Portugal P 20.00	Romania R 15.00
	Romania R 15.00	Russia R 15.00
	Russia R 15.00	Saudi Arabia R 10
	Saudi Arabia R 10	Slovakia S 15.00
	Slovakia S 15.00	Slovenia S 15.00
	Slovenia S 15.00	Spain S 15.00
	Spain S 15.00	Sweden S 15.00
	Sweden S 15.00	Switzerland S 15.00
	Switzerland S 15.00	Taiwan T 15.00
	Taiwan T 15.00	Turkey T 15.00
	Turkey T 15.00	USA US\$ 2.75

# The Guardian

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,747

## Sport

### Bowled over: Sorry England fail again in Zimbabwe

### Happy return: Cole scores in comeback as United go third

Special 16-page sports section

Page 4

## Fury as Major wins poll

Owen Bowcott

**T**HE Conservative Party last night denied it had systematically rigged a BBC Radio telephone poll which ended in bitter political recriminations as John Major was elected Personality of the Year.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, stepped into the row to back the BBC's selection procedure by claiming Mr Major's victory was due to nothing more than the "enthusiasm of Conservative Party voters".

But senior Labour figures, and the Independent politician, Bob Worcester of MORI, denounced the outcome, alleging widespread vote-fixing.

Labour's campaign spokesman, Brian Wilson, said: "This is the least credible result since Father Ted (the Channel 4 sitcom priest) was given the golden priest award on Christmas Eve."

Mr Major's disputed victory will nonetheless bring success to Conservatives who believe his easy-going personality is the only weapon they possess in the fight to win another term in office against overwhelming opinion poll odds.

The end of year poll — from which the Labour leader, Tony Blair, was banned before Christmas because of a leaked fax urging Labour supporters to call in on his behalf — also served to expose the parties' extreme sensitivity, giving a foretaste of how they may stoop to every trick of media manipulation in the coming general election.

The Boxing Day dispute was triggered by the BBC's revelation that it had disqualified 4,000 votes for Mr Major in the Today programme's annual poll on the grounds that they represented multiple voting by the same telephone number.

Amid a welter of claims and counter-accusations, the BBC confirmed that it would review its vote-checking procedures and may be forced to cancel future Personality of the Year competitions.

announced yesterday, gave the Prime Minister 23.5 per cent. His nearest rival, the Wolverhampton nursery teacher, Lisa Potts, who defended her pupils from a machete attack, was supported by 23.5 per cent of callers. In third place was the Burmese opposition leader Aung San Sun Kyi, with 17.5 per cent.

Mr Major, who is spending the Christmas holiday with his family in Huntingdon, declined to appear on the programme. He is due to be interviewed on Today early in the new year.

Downing Street last night declined to comment on claims that it had asked the BBC to keep the disqualification of votes secret.

Denying the result was due to vote-rigging, Mr Heseltine said: "I don't think that is anything to do with the Conservative Party. It is the enthusiasm of Conservative supporters. But the fact is that John has won. Now why don't we just sit back and enjoy it?"

But Mr Worcester of MORI said the disqualification of so many votes was an admission that there had been an attempt to rig the result. "The Tory Party clearly has been rigging... otherwise they would not have disqualified 4,000 votes. Why 4,000? It's arbitrary," he told the BBC's World at One.

Labour greeted the result with practised incredulity. Tony Banks, MP for Newham North West, said: "The idea that John Major could end up being voted Personality of the Year is so ludicrous as to beggar belief. It just indicates that the Labour Party has got an awful lot to learn when it comes to rigging polls."

Telephone numbers recorded as voting two or three times were not automatically discounted, given that the average household contains several members. Only those found to have called in repeatedly were disqualified.

A BBC spokeswoman said: "It is sad if people make multiple votes because it attacks the integrity of our poll. We review the competition every year. It may run again, it may not."

### Chilling out for charity



Gary Miller, left, and Gary Johnson braving the North Sea on Sunderland Lions' charity Boxing Day dip, which raised £18,600. PHOTOGRAPH OWEN HUMPHRIES

## Nurses 'admit Saudi killing'

Luke Harding and Kathy Evans

**T**HE two British nurses held on a murder charge in Saudi Arabia have confessed to killing their Australian colleague unintentionally, a leading Saudi-owned daily newspaper reported yesterday.

Quoting police sources, al-Hayat said Lucille McLaughlan and Deborah Parry admitted to senior Saudi investigating officers that they carried out the killing.

If their plea of manslaughter is accepted by an Islamic court the two women would escape being publicly beheaded. Under Sharia law a murder has to be premeditated to carry the death penalty.

Miss McLaughlan, aged 33, from Dundee, and Miss Parry, aged 41, from Birmingham, were formally charged on Christmas Eve with the murder of Yvonne Gillford, who was 55. The Australian nurse was stabbed five times, hit with a hammer and smothered in her room at King Fahd Military Medical College in Dhahran, where all three women worked.

Al-Hayat, based in London and one of the Arab world's most reputable newspapers, said the British women were caught using the dead nurse's credit cards on December 18, a week after the killing.

They were allegedly captured by security video cameras while going on a shopping spree. Saudi police had been monitoring the movements of all suspects, including the British nurses.

The newspaper claimed Miss Gillford had been murdered following a party attended by the two British nurses. Afterwards a row took place. Miss McLaughlan and Miss Parry later confessed to killing their colleague to senior investigating officers in Dhahran but insisted their actions were unintentional. It was reported.

The Saudi newspaper did not reveal the cause of the turn to page 3, column 1.

## Putting the spin on Cherie Booth

### Assistant and minder appointed to help Labour leader's wife cope with election

Owen MacAnuff, Chief Political Correspondent

**W**HEN is a spin-doctor for not a spin-doctor? The answer, when she is assistant or minder to Cherie Booth, wife of Labour leader Tony Blair, or so it seemed last night.

But the answer was proving difficult to swallow for some, especially when it turned out that Fiona Miller, the assistant or minder in question, was the long-time partner of Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's spin-doctor *par excellence*.

It might seem innocuous that Mr Campbell's partner should carry out a similar role for Mrs Blair as he does for Mr Blair. But both families have been friends since before Mr Campbell became his chief press secretary, back to when he was political editor of the Daily Mirror and Ms Miller was a lobby journalist on the Daily Express.

Ms Miller has been a friend of Cherie's for years and has unofficially looked after her press interests from time to time.

Her brief now is to aid Cherie during the election campaign, helping with the itinerary and organisation, but apparently not spin-doctoring.



Cherie Booth... to get help with organisation but no spin



Fiona Miller... long-time friend appointed to 'non-job'

The real spin-doctor said: "She will be there as a friend. It is a non-job." Which is a dismissive tone to adopt towards your long-term partner and mother of your children.

But the spin-doctor was unrepentant as he went on to make a distinction between the work of a spin-doctor and Ms Miller's work.

Cherie did not want to meet the press but if she did, that would be dealt with by the press office, or spin-doctors.

"We will take over when the press have to be dealt with," the source close to Alastair Campbell said.

Ms Miller's assignment completes the election quartet of the political wives and their minders: on the one side, Cherie and Fiona, on the other, Norma Major and her minder, Eileen Wise, head of news at Conservative Central Office.

The only one of the four women talking yesterday — anonymously — said the press was being "silly". They were not going to be significant to the election, as some journalists suggested. "It is all hype," she said. They would make appearances but not political judgments.

The battle of the wives began in September. Influenced by the high profile achieved by Hillary Clinton and Bob Dole's wife, Elizabeth, in a dull US election, the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Express ran stories saying Conservative Central Office would use Mrs Major more prominently. "Norma is PM's secret weapon in poll battle" said the Daily Express headline.

## Banzai! The tag to snag the bonsai crime wave

Vivek Chandhary

**A**NYONE given a bonsai tree for Christmas this year is likely to encounter a few problems looking after it.

The ancient art of bonsai growing is difficult enough, but there is also a good chance that your tree might end up going for a walk. There are reports of a bonsai crime wave costing thousands of pounds.

Using technology first developed to protect motorcycles, Mr Unwin's company, Bon-Tag, provides bonsai enthusiasts with kits to manufacture their own microchip transponders which can be injected into the tiny trunks of the trees.

If a tree is stolen and is then recovered by police, its ownership can be identified by running a hand-held scanner over it and revealing its unique serial number.

Mr Unwin, aged 37, from Bebbington, Wirral, said: "I have been studying bonsai since 1989, and I have always been keen on horticulture. I became aware of the need for better security after visiting a specialist nursery which had had a number of prize trees stolen."

According to Mr Unwin, a bonsai enthusiast himself, the transponders need no power sources, are hard working and last for decades, providing a life-long hidden security mechanism for collectors of the trees, which can be worth thousands of pounds.

The tracking kits can be purchased at specialist garden centres, through bonsai magazines and through bonsai shows. Once the tracking device has been fitted, a sign warning thieves that it is traceable is also placed near the tree.

Mr Unwin said: "These trees are living works of art. Some of the specimens in major museums are priceless because they have been passed down from generation to generation. Putting the chip in the tree does not harm it at all, because you drill through the outside bark which is effectively dead. We haven't had a tree yet died because of having a chip installed."

## Inside

**Britain**  
The number of people...  
5

## World News

**World News**  
The number of...  
12

## Finance

**Finance**  
The number of...  
16

## Sport

**Sport**  
The number of...  
2

## Friday Review

**Friday Review**  
returns next week  
Sport 196  
Quick Crossword 15  
Weather 16; Radio and TV 16

Please send me  Guardian International/Observer Travel Bag (cost £50.00); cost £... I enclose a cheque/money order for the sum of £... or please debit my Visa/Mastercard account.

Card No:

Expiry date:  Signature:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:  Country:

Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

**The Guardian International & The Observer Travel Bag**

This classic navy travel bag branded with the Guardian International and Observer logo is constructed from a water resistant, durable PVC.

The many notable features include a heavy duty shoulder strap, carry handles and double ended zipper compartments. (60x30x25cm)

To place your order please fill in the form below and send it to: The Guardian International/Observer Travel Bag Office, PO Box 355, Buxhey, Hens W12 2NA, UK with a cheque or money order for the full amount or fill in your Visa/Mastercard details.

Please send me  Guardian International/Observer Travel Bag (cost £50.00); cost £... I enclose a cheque/money order for the sum of £... or please debit my Visa/Mastercard account.

Card No:

Expiry date:  Signature:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:  Country:

Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

13  
14  
dian  
strong,  
grace  
intimacy



of health...  
open...  
General

1996

5  
12  
16  
2



Only Fools And Horses the most watched TV show as corporation has eight programmes in top 10 □ EastEnders tops soaps figures

# BBC wins Christmas ratings battle

Andrew Cull  
Media Correspondent

**T**HE BBC romped to its traditional Christmas Day victory over ITV, with eight of the top 10 rated programmes.

Only Fools and Horses, the bookmakers' favourite, was the most watched show, attracting 18.7 million viewers, according to unofficial early estimates published yesterday.

BBC captured 83 per cent of the Christmas Day audience, compared with ITV's 26 per cent. The shares are almost identical to 1995, when BBC won a 54 to 26 per cent victory.

ITV, which dominates the ratings for 51 weeks a year, is used to coming off second best to the BBC at Christmas. The corporation invested \$43 million in its two-week festive package for BBC1 and BBC2.

Even ITV's bankers — Coronation Street and Heartbeat — fared badly against the BBC's big hitters, including EastEnders and the terrestrial premiere of Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park.

Television watching reached its height at 9.30pm on Christmas Day, when the audience for Only Fools and Horses peaked at 19.1 million. A total of 28.8 million were watching the four terrestrial channels at the time.

Viewing figures were slightly down on Christmas 1995, the highest-rating programme last year was one of two editions of EastEnders, with 22.3 million.

Heartbeat, ITV's drama starring Nick Berry as a Yorkshire policeman, which normally attracts 15 million viewers, slipped to 11th place, with 7.9 million.

Some of the unofficial estimates will be increased when viewers who videoed programmes to watch later are included in the official figures to be published by the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) in two weeks.

BBC's EastEnders won the soaps battle with 15.9 million against Coronation Street's disappointing 9.4 million. The Street was ITV's highest placed programme at number seven.

A BBC spokesman said: "We are glad viewers chose to spend so much of Christmas Day with the BBC."

ITV, heavily criticised three years ago by the Independent Television Commission for not trying hard enough over Christmas, had assembled a more promising line-up. It had linked the day together with a live global party from HMS Belfast, hosted by Andrea Turner.

An ITV spokesman said: "Christmas is the time when the BBC traditionally go for broke and transmit all their top-rating shows and major movies in order to dominate the ratings."

ITV's big movie, The Remains of the Day attracted 4.6 million, compared with Jurassic Park's 14.5 million.

## TV viewing figures

### Christmas Day 1996, millions

Only Fools and Horses (BBC1)	18.7
EastEnders (BBC1)	15.9
Jurassic Park (BBC1)	14.5
Vicar of Dibley (BBC1)	14.5
Radio's All-New Christmas Blossoms (BBC1)	13.0
Animal Hospital Goes West (BBC1)	9.5
Coronation Street (ITV)	9.4
The Queen (BBC1)	9.1
Noel's Christmas Presents (BBC1)	9.0
Des O'Connor's Christmas with the Stars (ITV)	8.2

### Christmas Day 1995, millions

EastEnders II (BBC1)	22.3
EastEnders I (BBC1)	19.5
One Foot in the Grave (BBC1)	17.8
Coronation Street (ITV)	17.4
Keeping Up Appearances (BBC1)	16.7
Hook (BBC1)	12.5
Indecent Proposal (BBC1)	11.7
Noel's Christmas Presents (BBC1)	10.8
Auntie's New Blossoms (BBC1)	10.3
Only Fools and Horses (BBC1)	9.6



Rodney (Nicholas Lyndhurst) and Del Boy (David Jason) in fancy dress for the Christmas Day edition of Only Fools and Horses



Her Majesty... broadcast seen as a significant duty



Rory Bremner... timed to clash with Queen's message

## Queen loses half of her viewers over six years

Andrew Cull

**T**HE Queen has lost more than half of her Christmas Day viewers over the past six years.

This year's message, recorded at Sandringham, was watched by a total of 11 million BBC1 and ITV viewers, a drop of nearly 3 million in just 12 months.

The decline in interest in the message will dismay the Queen, who regarded the broadcast as one of her most significant duties of the year.

In 1991 it was watched by 23.3 million, having become firmly established as a 3pm post-Christmas lunch institution.

Her uncontroversial 1996 version, featuring footage of the state visits by President Mandela and President Chirac, was watched by 9.1 million viewers on BBC1 and 1.9 million on ITV, according to unofficial early estimates.

Five times as many watched on the BBC, pushing it into eighth place in the top 10 programmes, ahead of Noel Edmonds and Des O'Connor.

But last year 11.7 million watched on BBC1 and 2.2 million on ITV.

The decline in viewing has meant the National Grid has stopped preparing for a surge in electricity demand after the broadcast, as it does for other top-rated programmes.

The Queen faced competition from Channel 4, which cheekily scheduled its alternative message at 3pm, with impressionist Rory Bremner appearing as Diana, Princess of Wales, a figure conspicuous by her absence from the Queen's version. The show attracted 1.6 million viewers.

This year's message, which urged victims of tragedy to look forward with hope, was the last for two years to be produced by the BBC. For the next two years it will be made by ITV, although it will be broadcast on all channels as normal.

Buckingham Palace took the production away from the BBC in a move interpreted as retaliation for Panorama's 1995 interview with Princess Diana. That drew nearly 23 million viewers, almost equalling the Queen's 1991 performance.

The first Christmas Day radio broadcast was made in 1932 by George V. The first televised broadcast was in 1957.

The slide in the ratings does not take account of the extraordinary international popularity of the message, which is broadcast on the BBC World Service and throughout the Commonwealth.

## Register of police freemasons urged

Culture of secrecy encourages suspicions, says watchdog

Owen Bowcott

**P**OLICE officers who are freemasons should be forced to record their membership in an open register to dispel suspicions about favouritism and divided loyalties, a public watchdog proposed yesterday.

The Police Complaints Authority warned that there was a relatively widespread belief that some officers were subject to masonic influences, although it uncovered no clear evidence of abuse.

The PCA's proposal — in a written submission to the Commons Home Affairs select committee — will add to growing pressure for both the police and senior lawyers to declare their membership of masonic lodges.

The select committee is conducting an inquiry into

the influence of freemasonry and investigating whether any restrictions on membership should be imposed on police officers, prosecutors, judges or magistrates.

The PCA report claimed there were numerous instances in which dissatisfied applicants alleged that their complaints were not properly investigated because they're all masons.

It said a statutory register of membership should eventually be established; in the meantime officers should be required to record their lodge affiliations on their force personnel files.

John Cartwright, the PCA's deputy chairman, told BBC Radio yesterday: "At least we are starting to dismantle this culture of secrecy which we think is harmful to the police service."

"We have the situation sometimes in quite serious in-

vestigations where we discover that senior police officers or middle-ranking police officers are members of the same masonic lodge as people who are suspected of quite serious criminal offences.

"There may be nothing wrong going on but certainly the public and critics put two and two together and jump to the wrong conclusion."

The PCA's move reinforces anxiety about the influence of freemasonry expressed by Scotland Yard and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Earlier this year, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Paul Condon urged officers not to join lodges.

"I believe that if freemasonry was particularly strong in the police service in the past, it is not any more," Sir Paul said. "However, because of the public concern surrounding this issue I would advise my colleagues that it is better that they are not involved in freemasonry."

In October, ACPO suggested that members of the police service who were freemasons



John Cartwright: 'people jump to wrong conclusion'

should consider resigning from the brotherhood and that masonic membership should be compulsorily registered.

Both the recent revelation that Sir Frederick Crawford, chairman of the Criminal Cases Review Authority, was a leading freemason and

claims that the Dunblane mass-murderer Thomas Hamilton may have benefited from masonic connections have heightened public concern.

But resistance to the idea of a police register has been growing. The Police Federation, which represents 120,000 junior officers, has opposed the scheme, accusing chief constables of planning an "unwarranted interference" with the private lives of police officers.

Brian McKenzie, of the Superintendents' Association, suggested yesterday that any register should apply to the entire criminal justice system. "We would have no objection at all to compulsory registration of interest in such things as masonic lodges if other components of the criminal justice system — such as judges, Crown Prosecution Service lawyers and members of the PCA — also declared an interest," he suggested.

"They wield just as much power as police officers. Police officers feel there is an

attack on their integrity. We have got nothing to hide — but why single out police officers?"

Lord Justice Willlets, a judge in the Chancery Division of the Court of Appeal who is also a freemason, yesterday denied that lawyers had ever been subject to undue influences because of their membership of the organisation.

"I have been a mason for 20 years before I became a judge," he declared on BBC Radio. "It didn't affect my practice at the bar and it doesn't affect my position on the bench." The masonic oath, he added, was entirely compatible with the oath of a judge.

There are thought to be around 475,000 freemasons in almost 9,000 lodges in the United Kingdom. First established in this country in 1717, high-profile members include the Duke of Edinburgh, who joined the navy lodge in 1962, and the Duke of Kent who is the grand master and titular head of British freemasonry.

## Policeman held in paedophile inquiry

A SENIOR police officer is among seven men arrested as part of an inquiry into a paedophile ring at a council-run leisure centre.

The inspector, a married father of two in his early 50s, has been suspended from duty while the Police Complaints Authority carries out an investigation into teenage prostitution at the centre.

South Wales police have confirmed that the officer was one of the seven arrested in connection with allegations of gross indecency at Aberdare Leisure Centre in Gismorpan.

The inspector is based at Merthyr Tydfil and has almost 30 years' police experience. Detectives are interviewing a 15-year-old boy who, it is alleged, worked as a rent boy, using the leisure centre as a base. A 14-year-old boy is also being questioned. The boys gave police a list

of seven names, all professional men in the South Wales area.

Officers made the arrests on Monday and the seven were held at separate police stations. The inspector was on his way to work when officers from his own force detained him.

Other detectives were waiting at Cardiff airport to arrest two of the men as they flew in from Amsterdam.

Three are from Aberdare, two from Merthyr Tydfil, one is from Swansea and one from Brecon.

A South Wales detective said: "These men are all highly regarded in the community. There is a health manager, and an architect involved."

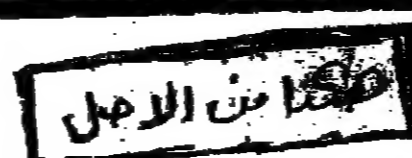
South Wales Police spokeswoman said: "Their ages range from 35 to 59 and one man is a senior police officer within the force." The men have been bailed until January 15.

# The John Lewis Clearance. It's like a sale, only better.

STARTS SATURDAY AT PETER JONES - Bishops Square, JOHN LEWIS: OXFORD STREET, BRENT CROSS, ABERDEEN, CHEADLE, EDINBURGH, HIGH WYCOMBE. STARTS TUESDAY AT JOHN LEWIS: BRISTOL, KINGSTON, MILTON KEYNES, PETERBOROUGH, WELWYN. BAINBRIDGE - Newcastle, BONDS - Norwich, CALEYS - Windsor, COLE BROTHERS - Sheffield, HEELAS - Reading, JESSOP & SON - Nottingham, KNIGHT & LEE - Southsea, GEORGE HENRY LEE - Liverpool, TREWINS - Watford, ROBERT BAYLE - Cambridge, TYRRELL & GREEN - Southampton.

At John Lewis Department Stores, even during a clearance, it's business as usual. For instance our pricing policy, summed up by 'Never Knowingly Underbid', means that if we find a local retailer offering the same goods at a lower price, we will reduce ours accordingly, even if their goods are in a sale. We still deliver free across a wide area. And whatever you buy, you can return it if you are not completely satisfied. The John Lewis Clearance. It's better than a sale.

JOHN LEWIS  
Department Stores





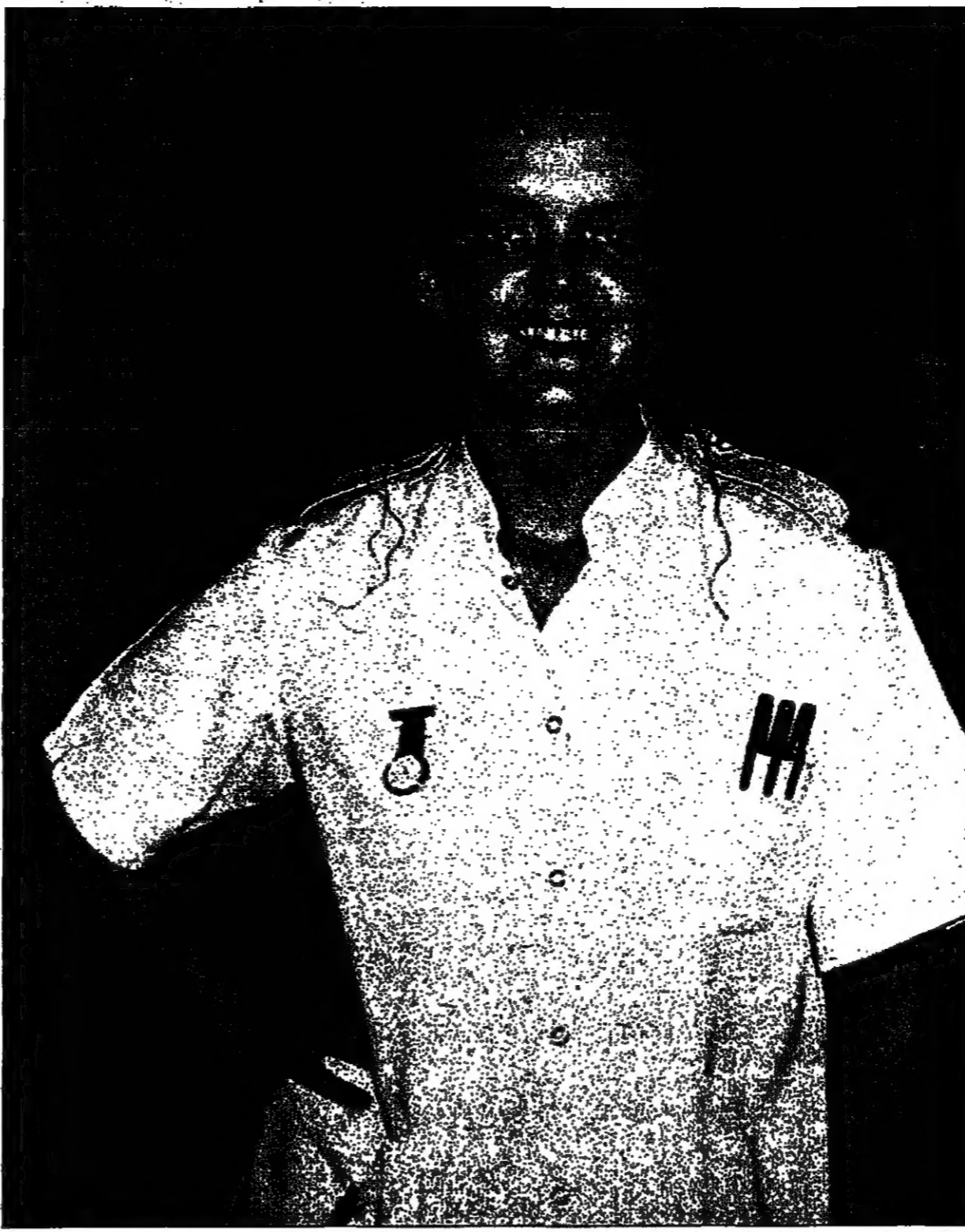
Yvonne Gilford, killed in her room in Dhahran.

# Nurses 'admit to Saudi killing'

### Britons could escape execution if manslaughter plea accepted

continued from page 1  
fight between the three nurses, but said they were good friends.  
Foreign Office officials last night dismissed al-Hayat's claim the women had confessed as "speculation". A spokesman added yesterday: "The issue at the moment is making sure the women get legal representation. The consul went to visit them a few days ago."  
"They are being held in good conditions. He arranged with them to pick up some belongings. What he is doing now is trying to sort out some

legal representation for them. He will continue to visit." About 70 people have been beheaded in Saudi Arabia this year, none of them Europeans. Beheading is the form of execution most regularly used in murder cases.  
Diplomatic sources say the Saudi regime is likely to be unmoved by representations from the international community and human rights groups if the British women are found guilty of premeditated murder. "You cannot compromise on the law of God," one diplomatic source said.



Lucille McLanchlan in Saudi Arabia. Her brother, John, said the murder charge was "very difficult to comprehend"

The victim's family would have to deny requests for clemency before a beheading could take place. This second requirement appears already to have been fulfilled. In a statement earlier this week Frank Gilford, the dead woman's brother, said the British women should suffer the same penalty as any Saudi. "Whoever did this did not give clemency to my sister," he said.  
Miss McLanchlan's brother John, aged 28, of Dundee, said yesterday her family had been heartbroken by her arrest. "We are struggling to

handle what has happened to Lucille," he added. "It is very difficult for us to comprehend."  
Her parents Stan and Ann intend to fly to Dhahran as soon as they are given permission to see their daughter. Dundee Teaching Hospitals have revealed that a nurse called Lucille McLanchlan was dismissed in May 1996 for gross misconduct following a police investigation. But they say they cannot link their former employee with the woman held in Saudi Arabia.  
Mr McLanchlan said his sister left of her own accord.

She went to Saudi Arabia in August.  
Saudi Arabia's unbending Islamic justice system has long been criticised by human rights groups in the West. In Saudi criminal courts defence lawyers are not usually allowed to be present. Translation facilities are poor or non-existent. Defendants have to answer questions put to them directly by the prosecuting judge.  
British embassy officials said yesterday that as yet no defence lawyers had yet been appointed by the two women. They are expected to be in jail

for a year at least before the investigation and trial is complete. If the victim's family then accepted pleas for clemency the way could be cleared for blood money to be paid to the victim's family for the loss of their relative. However, Saudi sources point out that the state would still have rights over the case in pursuing a death sentence or a term of imprisonment.  
The women can expect a relatively swift first appearance in court. But the trial, two levels of appeal court, and a final petition to King Fahd could take many months.

# Cunningham 'knifing' row

### Shadow cabinet in-fighting over campaigning roles exposed

**Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent**  
**P**OLITICAL in-fighting in the shadow cabinet broke into the open yesterday with a memo to discredit Jack Cunningham, the shadow national heritage secretary.  
Mr Cunningham was bottom of a list, distributed by Labour leader Tony Blair, showing the number of days that each shadow cabinet member had spent campaigning. According to sources close to the shadow cabinet, Mr Cunningham notched up only three days this year.  
The leaking of the information is part of the jockeying for position in the shadow cabinet as members fight for a place in a Labour cabinet.  
Mr Cunningham is unpopular with some MPs because of the high profile roles he has been given, especially in the last two election campaigns.

Mr Cunningham's allies, who are angry at what they see as an attempt to ambush him, dismissed the memo as inaccurate and out of date, claiming it only reflected campaign days organised through Labour's campaigns office. It did not take account of the many trips Mr Cunningham had undertaken on his own.  
One of his friends said: "I can't believe this. I know he has done more than that. He was out last week. Someone has tried to knife him in the back."  
Another friend added: "The campaigns office has often changed the schedule at 24 hours notice and he has not gone, but instead he has made his own arrangements."  
The league table in the memo was topped by John Prescott, the deputy leader. The number of days spent campaigning round the country for most of the shadow cabinet is believed to



Jack Cunningham: 'attempt made to discredit him'

have ranged from around 10 to more than 30.  
Some front-benchers are convinced Mr Blair will not be able to find places at the cabinet table for every member of the shadow cabinet.  
But Mr Blair's office was adamant that the present shadow cabinet members had nothing to fear: "We are committed to abiding by the PIP rules." Under Parliamentary Labour Party rules, every elected member of the shadow cabinet has to be given a cabinet job during Labour's first year in government.  
There was no discussion when Mr Blair circulated the memo at the December 11 shadow cabinet meeting, though one member said in a stage whisper: "Now we know what everyone has been doing."  
But Mr Blair included in the memo a plea for more campaigning in 1997 and shadow cabinet members have already responded, offering themselves for visits to constituencies throughout the country.  
Mr Cunningham, in spite of the attempt to discredit him, again appears destined for high office. He has been mentioned in the last month as a possible Northern Ireland Secretary. Unionist sources hinted they would prefer him to the shadow Northern Ireland secretary, Mo Mowlam, because he is in the same mould as Roy Mason, one of the toughest Northern Ireland secretaries in dealing with terrorists.

# Marchers defiant as Milosevic cracks down

**Julian Burger, East Europe Correspondent**

**T**HOUSANDS of Serbian riot police were deployed on the streets of Belgrade yesterday as President Slobodan Milosevic resorted to force to stamp out a campaign of daily demonstrations against government election rigging. But opposition leaders vowed the protests would go on.  
Heavily armed police — some with sniper rifles — prevented protesters from gathering in the central square, from where they have marched every day since the authorities annulled opposition wins in municipal elections on November 17.  
The interior ministry issued a statement on Wednesday banning any demonstrations that hindered traffic in Belgrade. A midday march by about 10,000 students was allowed to proceed but the police clearly had orders to stop the regular march by Belgrade residents in support of the opposition Zajedno (Together) coalition.  
The helmeted, blue-uniformed police surrounded the central square and hustled Zajedno supporters into a pedestrian precinct. They butted those who resisted with their shields and hit them with batons. The crowd of about 30,000 had dispersed by evening.  
Vuk Draskovic, an opposition leader, appealed for calm: "We have reliable information that the centre of terrorism wants to trigger major clashes, hoping that at least a policeman would be killed, so they can order an all-out attack against us."  
Zajedno officials said they feared authorities planned to arrest their leadership. Zoran Djindjic, another leader, asked supporters: "Can you imagine a country in which, after losing local elections, its president tries to provoke a civil war? Can you imagine what he would do if he lost a presidential election — provoke a world war?"  
Mr Djindjic added: "We will

always manage to last one day longer than Milosevic. They simply cannot keep 100,000 police in Belgrade every day, but we can hold out for six months if necessary."  
The crackdown came two days after the apparent failure of Mr Milosevic's attempt to use counter-demonstrations to crush the protest movement. After warm-up rallies in the provinces, the ruling Socialist Party bussed supporters into Belgrade on Tuesday and plied them with food and alcohol.  
The official media predicted a turnout of 500,000, but only an estimated 30,000 arrived. After skirmishes with an opposition crowd five times bigger, the police were called in and beat protesters. More than 50 people were injured.  
The first victim was reported to have died from his wounds. Doctors at a Belgrade hospital said Predrag Stankovic, aged 38, died after an alleged beating by government supporters.  
The federal deputy prime minister, Nikola Salnovic, said authorities would not use violence. But he added: "Anyone who violates or questions the authority of the law will not be tolerated."  
The show of force appears timed to divide the international community and preempt judgment by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in a report to be published today. It is expected to be highly critical of the conduct of the elections.  
Mr Milosevic turned down a request for an emergency meeting yesterday by the United States chargé d'affaires, Richard Miles, who met the foreign minister, Milan Milutinovic, instead.  
France yesterday urged safeguards on freedom of expression, while the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, warned Mr Milosevic not to hinder protests. "A further escalation won't be tolerated," he said.  
But the Russian foreign ministry deemed outside pressure on Belgrade to be "inadmissible interference".

# Wintry blast set to continue as icy roads bring deaths and injuries

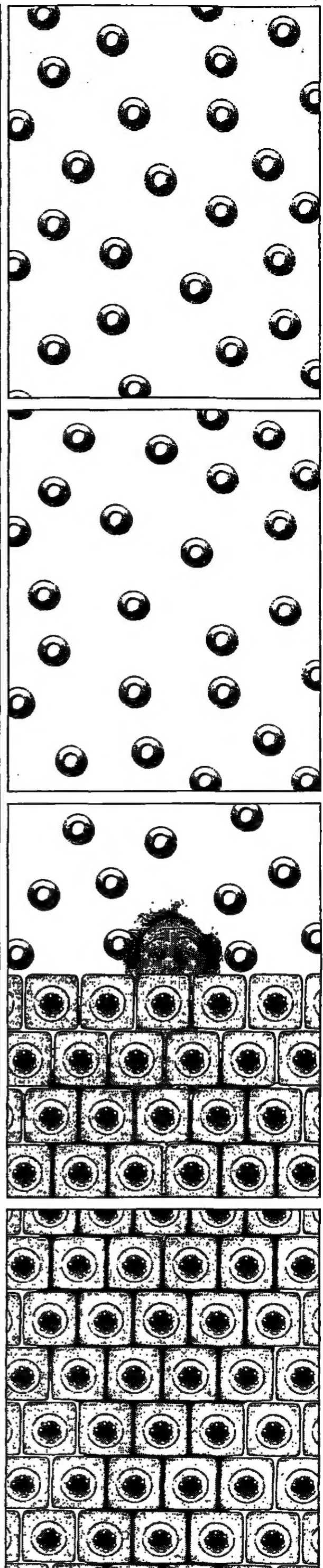
**M**ANY parts of Britain were expected to remain below freezing today, creating treacherous conditions for motorists with rain, sleet and snow in southern counties.  
The Meteorological Office said that after overnight temperatures down to -4°C (24°F), today's highest temperatures will be found in Scotland and Northern Ireland, at 5°C (41°F) and 6°C (43°F).

Elsewhere the maximum temperature will be 3°C (37°F).  
There were a spate of fatal accidents across the country yesterday, as thousands headed for the sales and sporting events.  
Two women died in an accident on the Cambridgeshire-Bedfordshire border which closed the A428 for several hours. A woman passenger died after two cars collided in Peterborough early yesterday. The A3 was at a standstill as drivers made their way to the Kempton races, and traffic around football stadiums all over the country was heavy.  
Lynne Biggs, 35, of Cambridgeshire, died on the A1 near Grantham, Lincs, as she travelled with her two daughters to visit relatives in Whitby, Bay, Northumbria, on Christmas morning. Police believe she was

caught out by a sudden rain shower which turned to ice. The girls, aged six and four, were not badly hurt.  
The bookies were yesterday counting up just how much they lost as a result of the brief Christmas Day snowfalls.  
They could face a six-figure payout as many places around the country had their first proper white Christmas for more than 20 years.

caught out by a sudden rain shower which turned to ice. The girls, aged six and four, were not badly hurt.  
The bookies were yesterday counting up just how much they lost as a result of the brief Christmas Day snowfalls.  
They could face a six-figure payout as many places around the country had their first proper white Christmas for more than 20 years.

**What price peace, if it can never be voted for? Peace does not just happen. It requires concessions at the top and the living of it down below.**  
**Peter Preston, page 11**



**HEAL'S**  
**WINTER SALE**  
**STARTS TODAY**  
TOTTENHAM CRT RD W1  
KINGS RD SW3  
TUNSGATE GUILDFORD

Household names revel in Christmas stage farce

# Old and new stars flourish on panto scene

Dan Glaister on the heroes and villains hamming it up for a Yuletide tradition

**T**WO Mr Blobbys, two Sooties and almost 50 Tommy the White Power Rangers... yes, it's panto time again, as the forgotten stars of stage and screen rouse themselves for several well-paid weeks' work in theatres around the country.

But which is the real Mr Blobby? There's one at the Grimsby Auditorium in a production of Cinderella, while another can be found at the Mayflower, Southampton, in its version of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Meanwhile Sooty pops up at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London and at the White Rock, Hastings, in Aladdin. But panto is about seeing real flesh and blood stars close up. Household names can be found donning tights and slapping thighs around the country.

The title of briskest dame must go to Frank Bruno, stepping out at the Alhambra, Bradford, in Jack and the Beanstalk. Jim Davidson does Dick Whittington in Bristol, and Paul Daniels also does Dick Whittington in Bournemouth.

Part of the pantomime season's joy is the potential it offers for the question "Where are they now?" Hi De Hi star Su Pollard appears in Cardiff, and Derek Nimmo can be found at Bath in Cinderella. Alvin Stardust, the 1970s pop star, a stalwart of the panto scene, is in Babes in the Wood in Hull, while a pop star from an even earlier era, Freddie Garrity, formerly of Freddie and the

Dreamers, is at Northampton, in Jack and the Beanstalk.

Other contenders for the "didn't you use to be...?" category include Lorraine Chase, appearing in Croydon, David Essex in Edinburgh, and Wayne Sleep in Poole. Sheffield hosts the combination of Danny La Rue and Les Dennis, while Richmond has Bonnie Langford and another veteran dame, Bernard Cribbins.

The more natural pairings of Little and Large, and Canon and Ball can be found at Swansea and Newcastle respectively.

It is a good year for Gladiators, with Ja Blesed appearing alongside Brian Blessed in Peter Pan in Tunbridge Wells. Wolf takes up position alongside Alvin Stardust in Babes in the Wood, and Hunter was last seen heading for Aladdin at Southampton.

Every panto needs its villain, however, and this year's panto pooper has to be Philip Hedley, director of the Theatre Royal, Stratford East. Mr Hedley (cool hiss) argues the tradition of pantomime has been betrayed by the development of what one critic has called "soapanto".

"I do think the pantomime is an enormously important part of British theatre and I hate it when it is treated with disrespect," said Mr Hedley, whose production of Beauty and the Beast is determinedly star-free.

"The pantomime is a Christmas tradition that overrides stars. We don't need them."



Dame is the spur... John Inman prepares for his role in Cinderella at the Mayflower in Southampton. The panto also stars Britt Ekland and Lionel Blair. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GOODWIN

Prestige performers



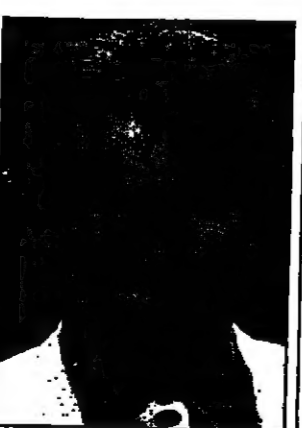
Frank Bruno in Jack and the Beanstalk



Su Pollard in Jack and the Beanstalk



Lorraine Chase in Jack and the Beanstalk



Jim Davidson in Dick Whittington



Paul Daniels in Dick Whittington



Bonnie Langford in Aladdin

# Dixons

# SALE

## STARTS TODAY

STORES OPEN SUNDAY

### MULTIMEDIA PCs - SAVE UP TO £150

**ACER ACROS PENTIUM P100 MULTIMEDIA PC**

- 100MHz Intel Pentium Processor
- 8Mb RAM
- 850Mb hard drive
- 8-speed CD-ROM drive
- Stereo sound card and speakers
- Includes software: Windows 95, Microsoft Works, FIFA Soccer 96
- Was £999

**SAVE £100** SALE PRICE **£899**

**SAVE UP TO £120**  
ON GREAT RANGE OF CAMCORDERS

**SAVE UP TO 50%**  
ON TOP PC & GAMES SOFTWARE

**SAVE UP TO £150**  
ON MULTIMEDIA COMPUTERS  
FREE PRINTER WITH SELECTED PACKARD BELL PCs

**SAVE UP TO £70**  
ON CAMERAS

**SAVE UP TO £100**  
ON AUDIO

**PLUS EXTRA SAVINGS**  
ON MANAGERS SPECIALS AND CLEARANCE ITEMS  
STRICTLY LIMITED STOCKS - CHECK YOUR LOCAL STORE FOR DETAILS

**SAVE UP TO £100**  
ON TV & VIDEO PACKAGES

**PORTABLE CD HI-FI - SAVE £40**

**UP TO 18 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION**  
ON SELECTED PRODUCTS

**SAIYO MCD-MS52 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM**  
SAVE £20 VOUCHER PRICE £99.99

**PERSONAL CD HI-FI - SAVE £10**

**JVC RC-0M10 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM**  
SAVE £10 VOUCHER PRICE £119.99

**SONY DESI DISCMAN**  
SAVE £10 VOUCHER PRICE £89.99

**SONY CD65 PORTABLE CD SYSTEM**  
SUPERB VALUE £99.99

**PRINTERS - SAVE £50**

**Packard Bell 8000 COLOUR INKJET PRINTER**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £249.99

**STAR LC200 24 PIN DOT MATRIX PRINTER**  
SAVE £20 VOUCHER PRICE £59.99

**LEONARDI WINNER 800 COLOUR INKJET PRINTER**  
SAVE £20 VOUCHER PRICE £199.99

**CANON BJC400 COLOUR INKJET PRINTER**  
SAVE £40 VOUCHER PRICE £209.99

**EPSON STYLUS 800 COLOUR INKJET PRINTER**  
SAVE £10 VOUCHER PRICE £249.99

**CANON BJC200 COLOUR INKJET PRINTER**  
SAVE £20 VOUCHER PRICE £249.99

**FREE PRINTER WITH SELECTED PACKARD BELL PCs**

**Packard Bell 8000 P100 PENTIUM MULTIMEDIA PC**  
SAVE £150 VOUCHER PRICE £1299

**Packard Bell 8000S P100 PENTIUM MULTIMEDIA PC**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £1349

**Packard Bell 8000D P100 PENTIUM MULTIMEDIA PC**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £1549

**Packard Bell 8000E P100 PENTIUM MULTIMEDIA PC**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £1749

**Packard Bell 8000F P100 PENTIUM MULTIMEDIA PC**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £1949

**Packard Bell 8000G P100 PENTIUM MULTIMEDIA PC**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £2449

**CD MINI HI-FI SAVE £100**

**JVC ADAR01 DIT MULTIPLAY CD MINI HI-FI**  
SAVE £100 VOUCHER PRICE £299.99

**AIWA NSX700 CD MINI HI-FI**  
SAVE £50 VOUCHER PRICE £149.99

**AIWA NSX600 MFC MULTIPLAY CD MINI HI-FI**  
SAVE £100 VOUCHER PRICE £349.99

**PC SOFTWARE - SAVE UP TO 50%**

**FIFA 96 FOOTBALL ACTION**  
SAVE £10 VOUCHER PRICE £14.99

**MR POTATO HEAD, PUZZLES & PLAYDOY**  
BUY 2 GET ONE FREE VOUCHER PRICE £19.99

**TRIVAL PURSUIT**  
HALF PRICE VOUCHER PRICE £19.99

**MICRO HI-FI - SAVE UP TO £30**

**AIWA NSX400 REMOTE CONTROL CD MINI HI-FI**  
SAVE £30 VOUCHER PRICE £269.99

مكتبة الامم

He felt natur... gag... home

Anti-bloodsports campaigners claim fox hunting has lost advocates and that even the 'hunter's bible' agrees. Kamal Ahmed reports

# Number of fox hunts falls to 30-year low

**T**HE number of fox hunts has fallen to its lowest level for 30 years according to figures compiled by the League Against Cruel Sports.

Launching its Boxing Day campaign against the traditional post-Christmas hunt meetings, the league said 43 hunts had been disbanded since the 1960s, leaving 187 fox hunts still operating across Britain.

The figures were compiled from Bally's Hunting Directory, described as "the hunters' bible".

At the same time the number of drag hunts, the fox-friendly method where a scent is laid by a human "runner" for the hounds to follow, has more than trebled.

"People are turning away from fox hunting, which the public knows is barbaric, to drag hunting which is much more palatable," said John Bryant of the league's executive committee. "Public opinion is now so against hunting that the hunts are having difficulty recruiting new people."

Almost all of the 280 Boxing Day hunts had to be called off yesterday because of freezing weather which made riding difficult. Of 21 hunts monitored by the league, only one, the Royal Artillery Hunt, had any success, catching one fox on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire.

"This is very good news, the weather just got the better of them," said Kevin Saunders, spokesman for the league. "In most cases they did

meet but all they could do was trot around the village before packing up and going home."

More than 1,000 demonstrators turned up at meets across the country, the largest at Maldon in Essex where 200 anti-hunting protesters gathered. About 30 hunters were heckled as they met in the town's high street for the annual Essex Farmers and Union Foxhounds hunt.

The protesters, including a woman waving placards and chanting "Hunters Out", "Cowards" and "Rich man, poor fox". On the other side of the street about 100 hunt supporters

and there were many more to come. "I have been coming to these meetings for the past 28 years and we are not about to be intimidated by a bunch of people trying to stop this great tradition," said Douglas Mann, a senior hunter with the Essex Farmers.

The hunt set off after 30 minutes, closely followed by league monitors and hunt saboteurs wearing balaclavas and combat dress. During one altercation on the route, one of the hounds was hit by a passing car but was not thought to be seriously injured.

"This may well be the last bloody Boxing Day," said Lawrie Payne, executive officer with the league, referring to Labour plans to ban hunting on public land if the party wins the next election.

Elliot Morley, Labour's spokesman on animal welfare said last night the party had no plans to water down its promise of a free Commons vote on hunting when it next gets into office.

He added: "Reports that we are changing our line are pure fabrication. The abolition of hunting is now a central manifesto commitment and is supported by Labour members and the general public."

The British Field Sports Society disputed the league's claims that the number of groups going for hunting is falling. A spokesman said that some hunts had been amalgamated but that the "tide of opinion" was turning towards hunting as a way of conserving the countryside.

## The hunts are having difficulty

A handful of hunt saboteurs, waving placards and chanting "Hunters Out", "Cowards" and "Rich man, poor fox". On the other side of the street about 100 hunt supporters

The league also unveiled its latest advertising campaign against hunting. A billboard poster quotes Robin Hambury-Tenison, chief executive of the British Field Sports Society, saying on a Radio 5 programme last year: "If you've ever been hunting you've seen how foxes laugh at the hounds."

Underneath is a picture of a disembowelled fox which has been caught by hounds and the message: "He must have died laughing."

But hunters dismissed the protest, saying there had been meets in Maldon for 75 years



Protesters harry one rider at the start of the Essex Farmers and Union Foxhounds hunt in High Street, Maldon, Essex. PHOTOGRAPHS: GRAHAM TURNER



In the clear... riders and hounds outside Maldon move out in pursuit of their prey

## Job insecurity 'no myth'

Thousands face discrimination on mortgages, says Labour

Even MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

**H**UNDREDS of thousands of people face discrimination over mortgages because of job insecurity, according to a Labour survey of lenders.

Lenders generally appear less willing to give mortgages to people in short-term contract work and other jobs not regarded as permanent. Peter Hain, Labour's employment spokesman, commenting on his survey of 28 building societies, banks and other lenders, said: "Job insecurity has infested our work force and although mortgage and lending companies have tried to become more flexible, there are still many people without a secure, permanent income who are excluded from receiving a mortgage or loan."

Mr Hain said the Department of Education and Employment dismissed the idea of job insecurity as a myth but the survey confirmed it. A spokesman for the department was unmoved yesterday: "There is little evidence of rising insecurity in employment. The overall turnover of jobs has changed little over the past 10 years. A stronger labour market is the best antidote to job insecurity. Unemployment is now below 2 million and falling."

A department source said there were no figures in Mr Hain's survey to back up his assertion that job insecurity was leading to people being denied mortgages.

Among those who responded to the survey was Charles Nunneley, chairman of Nationwide Building Society, who said: "It is not in the interests of either the borrower or Nationwide to offer mortgage finance that a borrower will find difficult to repay. Discrimination in this sense is praiseworthy, not blameworthy."

Alistair Dales, chairman of UCB Home Loans, said: "You suggested that there should not be discrimination against people who do not enjoy 'permanent' employment but by the very nature of the industry, those who are not in full-time employment have different risks attached to them. As a responsible lender, it is important for those risks to be considered diligently and pragmatically in order to strike the right balance between risk and reward."

A D Smeddon, chief general manager of Co-operative Insurance Society, said: "For employees, the general rule that applies is that employment must be on a permanent basis. However, because the employment market is going through considerable changes in terms of permanency of positions, flexibility is again applied, and each case is considered on its merits."

Mr Hain said ministers should be addressing job insecurity instead of dismissing it.

# SALE

NOW ON OPEN TODAY 9am-8pm

## 50% OFF

UP TO 45 STYLES REDUCED

KITCHEN CABINETS



**THIS INTEGRATED DISHWASHER FOR ONLY £199.99**

**COMPLETE 8 CABINET MALVERN KITCHEN**

**AEG ELECTRIC SINGLE OVEN GROUP**

**LOW COST INSTALLATION AVAILABLE**

**MFI**

**MFI home works**

He felt the club "family" was his natural circle, and built it into a gag: "I love this club, it's just like home — filthy and full of strangers." John Fordham on Ronnie Scott

Obituaries page 9



# Tensions eased by cash cover for World Service

Andrew Cuff  
Media Correspondent

**T**HE wreath tied to railings outside BBC World Service headquarters at Bush House, central London, has been quietly removed and the threat of closure of six language services has receded after the BBC won a battle with the Foreign Office to protect its funding.

Caroline Thomson, deputy managing director for the service, said: "We have been on a roller coaster in 1996, but now we have been given a breathing space."

Sam Younger, managing director, who considered resigning over the peremptory restructuring of the service by John Birt, the director general, has unveiled a five year strategy which involves hauling the service into the 21st century.

The controversial restructuring — which prompted employees and the Guardian to launch Save the World Service campaigns — is going ahead, with additional safeguards agreed between the BBC and the FO.

Its news operation is to be merged with the BBC's domestic news directorate, and English language programmes will be merged with domestic radio production.

But the tensions have eased and the staff are now looking ahead. Ms Thomson said: "Because the World Service has been enormously successful, people think it does not face the same competitive challenges as the rest of broadcasting."

"It needs to change quickly. We need to have a vision of ourselves as Britain's international public service broadcaster, rather than an international radio station."

Although the Government announced an extra £5 million of Foreign Office grant-in-aid in last month's Budget, the World Service could still face a £40 million funding gap over five years.

Ms Thomson said the strategy needed a government commitment to fund at existing levels "plus a little bit".

For the foreseeable future most of the service's 140 million listeners worldwide will tune in on crackly short wave or local AM and FM stations rebroadcasting its output.

The aim, however, is to use developing digital satellite

## Ruling the waves

Radio on short wave to remain core of World Service output for foreseeable future.

Development of digital satellite broadcasting to improve reception in South America and South Africa.

Digital satellite broadcasting to be used to develop a 24-hour news channel to run alongside traditional output.

Development of Internet services, first in text then in audio as technology improves.

In central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, vernacular TV services planned to complement radio.

World Service to be available 24 hours a day in Britain on terrestrial digital audio broadcasting.

technology to fill in poorly served areas and to launch a second World Service channel broadcasting 24-hour news.

Thomson said: "It would not cost a lot of extra money but could double our hit on the audience." In areas such as India and sub-Saharan Africa offering round-the-clock news would be a big competitive advantage.

Ms Thomson said the service wanted permission to spend grant-in-aid on TV services in areas including central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

She said use of the Internet could be of critical importance in broadcasting Cantonese services in the run-up to China's takeover of Hong Kong in June, when radio services could be jammed.

The £5 million additional funding has halted the immediate threat to jobs, beyond the 100 already axed, although Ms Thomson said dire warnings before the Budget were not "shroud waving".

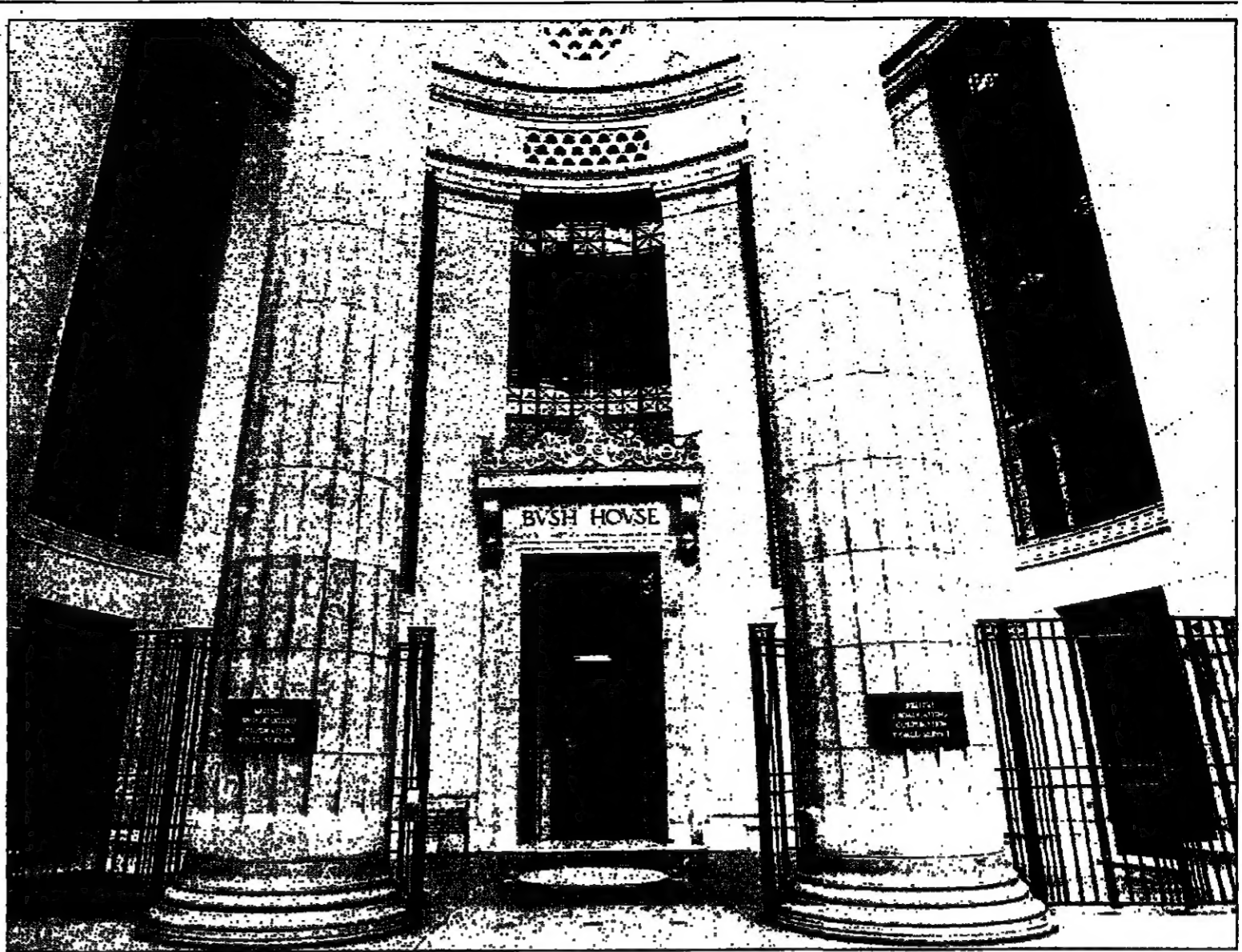
She admitted that the restructuring was not the smoothest process imaginable.

"Some staff are positively enthusiastic, while others are putting up with it. It would be unrealistic to expect anything else," she said.

"We have got to change the mindset we need to introduce flexibility and become known as one solid radio service and more as a range of services."



All quiet at HQ... Bush House, London home of the BBC World Service, with John Birt (top left) and Caroline Thomson



MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID BILLYE

## Battle stations

June 7: John Birt announces BBC restructuring, including merger of World Service news and English language production with domestic radio departments.

July 25: Governors back Birt and Bland.

July 31: Select committee urges Foreign Office to prevent service from being "submerged in vast new BBC superstructure".

August 8: PO minister Jeremy Hanley says changes not "cast in stone".

September 16: Guardian reveals names of five experts on working group led by Baroness Hoegge, former aide to John Major.

September 18: World Service staff warn merger will increase costs.

September 24: Ninety jobs axed because of £5 million funding shortfall.

October 14: BBC-FCO working group announces 20 safeguards to service.

November 12: Hanley accuses BBC of waging media war, to influence Budget settlement.

November 28: FO increases grant by £5 million, taking operating budget to £182.4 million. Six language services saved from closure.

calling on BBC governors to reconsider.

August 8: PO minister Jeremy Hanley says changes not "cast in stone".

September 16: Guardian reveals names of five experts on working group led by Baroness Hoegge, former aide to John Major.

September 18: World Service staff warn merger will increase costs.

September 24: Ninety jobs axed because of £5 million funding shortfall.

October 14: BBC-FCO working group announces 20 safeguards to service.

November 12: Hanley accuses BBC of waging media war, to influence Budget settlement.

November 28: FO increases grant by £5 million, taking operating budget to £182.4 million. Six language services saved from closure.

## Railtrack sends £38,000 bill to woman for repairs to wall

Geoffrey Gibbs

**T**HIS year got off to a bad start for Margaret Kemp. Her garden wall fell down after the January storms, blocking the main London to Penzance railway line.

The end of the year has proved even worse. Railtrack, the multi-million-pound privatised railway infrastructure company, has just presented her with a £37,000.04 bill for repairs and clearing up the mess.

According to Railtrack Mrs Kemp's wall set off a domino effect, knocking down a parallel 25ft stretch of wall owned by the company and sending the culverts crashing into the Redruth were cut for four days.

Mrs Kemp, aged 32, is disputing the claim. She claims no one knows whether it was her wall that came tumbling down first and that she was a problem solver. "If there was a problem, it was their wall surely they should have been monitoring it themselves," she said yesterday.

She said she was disgusted

and "knocked for six" when the bill arrived at her home in Redruth. "I am a single mother with two young kids living on income support. How the hell could I pay them nearly £38,000? This happened nearly 12 months ago, and I get this bill just before Christmas."

Railtrack denied it was playing the anti-Santa. "We regret sending out a bill like this but we can't be held responsible for neighbouring properties," said a spokesman.

"We are saying it is her wall and her responsibility to maintain it. The incident closed the line and had to be dealt with immediately. It may seem like a lot of money but you have to take into account this was a structural load-bearing wall."

He said the company was obliged to send the letter but was hoping the repair costs would be recovered from her insurers.

That has done little to ease Mrs Kemp's concern. When the wall collapsed, she was told she was not covered by her insurance. She is hoping the collector will now be able to prove otherwise.

# COMET SALE NOW ON

## PLUS EXTRA SAVINGS LAST 2 DAYS

**WHIRLPOOL**  
9.8 GROSS CUBIC FT FRIDGE FREEZER

- 9.7 cubic gross fridge capacity
- 17 cubic gross freezer capacity
- Automatic defrost defroster
- Fast freeze facility
- 2 salad drawers • 2 reversible doors
- 2 glass shelves • 2 reversible shelves

Model: WH7700 • Was £299.99  
CASH: £249.99 • SALE: £229.99

**VOUCHER SAVE**  
**£249.99 £150**  
LOWER THAN SALE PRICE - LAST 2 DAYS

**INDESIT**  
1200 SPIN WASHING MACHINE

- 900-1200 spin
- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: IW1253 • Was £399.99 • SALE: £279.99

**KENWOOD TOUCH CONTROL**  
MICROWAVE OVEN WITH GRILL

- 700 watts
- 1000 watts grill
- 1000 watts defrost
- 1000 watts cook

Model: KM3501T • Was £139.99 • SALE: £109.99

**NO CLAIM MONEY BACK 5-YEAR WARRANTY**  
For real peace of mind, a single premium payment guarantees five years' comprehensive cover against product breakdown. If, after five years, you've made no claim, you can get all your warranty money back in full.

## SAVE UP TO £120 ON LAUNDRY & DISHWASHERS

**HOTPOINT**  
1000 SPIN WASHING MACHINE

- 1000 spin
- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: H1253 • Was £399.99 • SALE: £279.99

**CRUSADER**  
REVERSE ACTION TUMBLE DRYER

- 8.5lb drying load
- 2 drying programmes
- Final cool tumble

Model: SD717 • Was £159.99 • SALE: £109.99

**TRICITY BENDIX**  
1000 SPIN WASHING MACHINE

- 1000 spin
- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: TR1253 • Was £399.99 • SALE: £279.99

**ZANUSSI**  
FULL SIZE DISHWASHER

- 12 place settings
- 12 programmes
- 12 temperature
- 12 spin speeds
- 12 spin times

Model: ZD1253 • Was £499.99 • SALE: £399.99

**SAVE UP TO £130 ON REFRIGERATION**

**LEC**  
4.3 GROSS CUBIC FT FRIDGE

- 4.3 cubic gross fridge capacity
- 1.7 cubic gross freezer capacity
- Automatic defrost defroster
- Fast freeze facility

Model: LFR1253 • Was £499.99 • SALE: £369.99

**ZANUSSI**  
4.3 GROSS CUBIC UPRIGHT FREEZER

- 4.3 cubic gross freezer capacity
- 1.7 cubic gross fridge capacity
- Automatic defrost defroster
- Fast freeze facility

Model: ZFR1253 • Was £249.99 • SALE: £119.99

**HOTPOINT**  
1200 SPIN WASHING MACHINE

- 1200 spin
- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: H1253 • Was £399.99 • SALE: £279.99

**SAVE UP TO £250 ON COOKERS**

**BELLING**  
ELECTRIC COOKER

- 1000 watts
- 1000 watts grill
- 1000 watts defrost
- 1000 watts cook

Model: BE1253 • Was £699.99 • SALE: £449.99

**STOVES**  
RANGE COOKER

- 1000 watts
- 1000 watts grill
- 1000 watts defrost
- 1000 watts cook

Model: ST1253 • Was £399.99 • SALE: £279.99

**SAVE UP TO 50% ON CLEANERS**

**DYSON**  
CYCLONE CLEANER

- 1200 watts suction power
- 1200 watts motor
- 1200 watts fan
- 1200 watts brush

Model: DC1253 • Was £189.99 • SALE: £109.99

**HOVER**  
CYLINDER CLEANER

- 1200 watts suction power
- 1200 watts motor
- 1200 watts fan
- 1200 watts brush

Model: HO1253 • Was £79.99 • SALE: £39.99

**PANASONIC**  
UPRIGHT CLEANER

- 1200 watts suction power
- 1200 watts motor
- 1200 watts fan
- 1200 watts brush

Model: PA1253 • Was £79.99 • SALE: £39.99

## SAVE £150 ON THIS HOME CINEMA PACKAGE

**TOSHIBA**  
37" HOME CINEMA TV

- 37" screen
- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: TH1253 • Was £1499.99 • SALE: £1349.99

**SONY**  
NICAM STEREO TELEVISION

- 37" screen
- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: SO1253 • Was £1499.99 • SALE: £1349.99

**SAVE £30 ON THIS NICAM STEREO VIDEO**

**AIWA**  
NICAM STEREO VIDEO

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: AI1253 • Was £269.99 • SALE: £239.99

**SAVE £50 ON THIS CAMCORDER**

**JVC**  
VHS-C CAMCORDER

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: JVC1253 • Was £549.99 • SALE: £499.99

**SAVE £10 ON THIS BT CORDLESS PHONE**

**BT**  
CORDLESS TELEPHONE

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: BT1253 • Was £119.99 • SALE: £109.99

**SAVE UP TO £170 ON HI-FI SYSTEMS**

**PIONEER**  
CD MINI HI-FI

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: PI1253 • Was £329.99 • SALE: £159.99

**PHILIPS**  
MICRO HI-FI

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: PH1253 • Was £199.99 • SALE: £170.00

**AIWA**  
HI-FI SYSTEM

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: AI1253 • Was £299.99 • SALE: £250.00

**SONY**  
DIGI MULTIPLAY CD HI-FI

- 16 programmes
- 16 temperature
- 16 spin speeds
- 16 spin times

Model: SO1253 • Was £449.99 • SALE: £399.99

**THE COMET PRICE PROMISE**  
If you buy any product from Comet, then within 14 days find the same offer on sale locally or a lower price, we'll happily refund the difference, PLUS 20% OF THAT DIFFERENCE.

**£5 MILLION STOCK CLEARANCE**  
Choose from a wide range of ex-display, shop soiled and refurbished products, all at clearout prices. All guaranteed for 12 months.

# Radio One DJ in hospital after attack

John Duncan in Havana

**ANNIE** Nightingale, Britain's first woman disc jockey, was recovering in hospital yesterday after being mugged and beaten by three youths as she returned home from a night out in Havana where she was researching a programme about Cuban music.

Ms Nightingale, aged 54, was attacked at 1am in the centre of Havana by a gang, two of whom were on bicycles, who tried to snatch her bag. As she resisted, she was kicked and beaten leaving her with a broken hip joint and bruises to her face and arm. She had a three-hour operation on Christmas Eve. She will return to England on December 31, though Cuban doctors say she will be unable to walk for at least two months.

The Radio One DJ said yesterday: "We were getting back to a friend's house and I saw this guy standing on the corner looking suspicious. We walked past him. There had been two guys on bicycles circling us but I didn't think anything of it. Then it happened. It was so unexpected and so vicious. I felt the bag being grabbed, torn off my shoulder and I, stupidly per-



Annie Nightingale, who is recovering after a beating by muggers left her with a broken hip joint and bruising

haps, resisted so one of them grabbed me by the arm and twisted me round. "I felt this blow and the next thing I am on the ground. I realised straight away that something was horribly wrong. I tried to stand up but I felt this horrible grating sound."

It was four hours before Ms Nightingale, who has travelled extensively by dangerous areas such as Iraq, Iran and the Andes without incident, was treated. "My friends tried to get me out of there in a car but I couldn't even be slid on to the back seat I was in so much pain.

Eventually we got to one hospital which was horrible. They tried to put me on a stretcher but being moved at all was unbearably painful. Then they just left me. I was in a terrible state."

Eventually Ms Nightingale was transferred to the Cira Garcia, a modern dollar-only hospital used by foreigners and diplomats. She was told she needed an immediate operation. "The doctor said there was a danger of thrombosis if I didn't," she said. "It's all such a pity because I was having a great time, but I suppose things like this can happen anywhere."

# Tuition enabled 5,000 six-year-olds to catch up

## Axed reading plan 'shown to work'

Donald MacLeod  
Education Correspondent

**A** CHILDREN'S reading programme axed by the Government last year is proving increasingly effective in the schools that have kept it going, researchers have found. Reading Recovery, imported from New Zealand four years ago, helped nearly 5,000 six-year-olds during the last school year, according to a forthcoming report from London university's Institute of Education.

The Government withdrew funding after a three-year pilot programme costing £14 million, leaving local authorities to support its continuation. Twenty-eight are doing so, with two in Northern Ireland taking it on this year. Supporters argue that Reading Recovery is cost effective, cutting out expensive remedial help later on and preventing failure at school. It would tackle "the long tail of under-achievement" in English classrooms, they say. But as an alternative, Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, this year set up 14 literacy centres in England at a cost of £12.5 million over five years to train teachers in reading methods, including phonics. Angela Hobsbaum, a researcher at the Institute, said Reading Recovery programmes were getting shorter as teachers became more

effective. The programme helped the weakest six-year-olds, who after a year at school knew fewer than half the alphabet and could write only four or five words. Without expert help they would fall further behind, she said. Improving literacy was not cheap, but the £1,200 for Reading Recovery compared favourably with an estimated £300 a year for five years of remedial help at primary school. "Other forms of in-school support have not been shown to be beneficial," Ms Hobsbaum added. "After a brief, intensive and effective programme, the children can keep up with their classmates. No further specialised tuition is required." Parents said their children were happier and more confident after Reading Recovery tuition, she said.

# Schoolbook shortage 'lowering standards'

Donald MacLeod

**M**ORE than 5,000 schools in England had shortages of books or equipment that were damaging children's education, the Office for Standards in Education has revealed. In a letter to David Blunkett, shadow education secretary, Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, said 18 per cent of primary schools

and 23 per cent of secondaries had book shortages which had "adversely affected the standards of lessons". Labour calculates that this would mean a total of 3,242 schools had book shortages and 2,325 had equipment shortages. Of these, 1,402 were short of both books and equipment. Estelle Morris, a Labour education spokeswoman, said yesterday that parents were already having to subsidise

books and equipment for their children. The figures showed "the reality behind the Government's rhetoric". She accused it of performing "a sleight of hand" in next year's budget for schools. The increased assessment of schools spending promised in the Budget "does not translate into an equivalent increase in grant for local education authorities and schools", she said.

### COMPACT CAMERAS - SAVE 50%

**SAMSUNG WR10**  
35mm AUTOFOCUS CAMERA  
Includes video, case, film and batteries.  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £149.99**

**MIRANDA M051**  
35mm CAMERA  
Was £19.99. **HALF PRICE £9.99**

**CHINON SP2008**  
35mm AUTOFOCUS CAMERA  
Was £39.99. **SALE PRICE £19.99**

**OLYMPUS AF11**  
35mm AUTOFOCUS CAMERA  
Was £29.99. **SALE PRICE £14.99**

**PENTAX PC-SQ2**  
35mm AUTOFOCUS CAMERA  
Was £69.99. **SALE PRICE £34.99**

**OLYMPUS M11**  
35mm AUTOFOCUS CAMERA  
Was £29.99. **SALE PRICE £14.99**

### ZOOM COMPACTS - SAVE 70%

**KONICA ZONE BLACK**  
35-105mm ZOOM CAMERA  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £89.99**

**CHINON Z200**  
35-70mm ZOOM CAMERA  
Was £89.99. **SALE PRICE £26.99**

**PENTAX ESP1073**  
35-70mm ZOOM CAMERA  
Was £109.99. **SALE PRICE £32.99**

**SAMSUNG 1050**  
35-105mm ZOOM CAMERA  
Was £169.99. **SALE PRICE £49.99**

**PENTAX ESP1040**  
35-140mm ZOOM CAMERA  
Was £269.99. **SALE PRICE £79.99**

### ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM - SAVE 40%

**CHINON AP6005**  
ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM CAMERA  
Was £39.99. **SALE PRICE £23.99**

**Kodak ADVANTIX 3000K**  
ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM CAMERA  
Was £99.99. **SALE PRICE £59.99**

**VINTAGE 300K**  
ADVANCED PHOTO SYSTEM CAMERA  
Was £129.99. **SALE PRICE £77.99**

### CAMCORDERS - SAVE 100

**JVC GRAX 480 VHS-C**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £549.99. **SALE PRICE £449.99**

**SONY TRV30**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £529.99. **SALE PRICE £429.99**

**Panasonic NV123**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £599.99. **SALE PRICE £499.99**

**Canon UC30**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £749.99. **SALE PRICE £649.99**

### CAMCORDERS SAVE 120

**Panasonic NV-3**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £399.99. **SALE PRICE £279.99**

**SANYO VM-C480**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £479.99. **SALE PRICE £359.99**

**SANYO VM-C250**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £499.99. **SALE PRICE £379.99**

**SONY TRV11**  
CAMCORDER WITH VHS-C CASSETTES  
Was £649.99. **SALE PRICE £529.99**

### VIDEOS - SAVE 80

**MATSUI 2009R**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £309.99. **SALE PRICE £229.99**

**MATSUI 20M1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £599.99. **SALE PRICE £419.99**

**JVC 20T1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £479.99. **SALE PRICE £399.99**

**SONY 21T1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £499.99. **SALE PRICE £399.99**

**SHARP 20AT5**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £399.99. **SALE PRICE £299.99**

**MATSUI 40V1**  
40" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £129.99. **SALE PRICE £99.99**

**MATSUI 40T1**  
40" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £149.99. **SALE PRICE £119.99**

**MATSUI 21**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £219.99**

### TV'S - SAVE 200

**Panasonic M52R**  
14" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £169.99. **SALE PRICE £139.99**

**HITACHI 14T1**  
14" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £179.99. **SALE PRICE £149.99**

**SONY KV11T1**  
11" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £199.99. **SALE PRICE £159.99**

**Goldstar H1520**  
15" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £239.99**

**MATSUI 20M1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £359.99. **SALE PRICE £279.99**

### GAMES - SAVE 199

**SEGA SATURN**  
3-GAME PACK  
Was £199.99. **SALE PRICE £159.99**

**SEGA SATURN**  
CONSOLE PLUS 3-GAME PACK  
Was £269.99. **SALE PRICE £219.99**

**SEGA SATURN**  
CONSOLE PLUS 6-GAME PACK  
Was £329.99. **SALE PRICE £269.99**

### 22 OFF ANY PLAYSTATION OR SATURN TITLE

**21 OFF ANY MEGADRIVE GAMES OR GAME BOY TITLE**

**OVER 75 TITLES Reduced in Store**

**18 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION**

**0% ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE**

**29.5% APR**

### TV VIDEO PACKAGES - SAVE 100

**MATSUI 2009R**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £309.99. **SALE PRICE £209.99**

**MATSUI 20M1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £599.99. **SALE PRICE £499.99**

**JVC 20T1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £479.99. **SALE PRICE £379.99**

**SONY 21T1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £499.99. **SALE PRICE £399.99**

### TV VIDEO PACKAGE - SAVE 50

**SHARP 20AT5**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £399.99. **SALE PRICE £299.99**

**MATSUI 40V1**  
40" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £129.99. **SALE PRICE £99.99**

**MATSUI 40T1**  
40" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £149.99. **SALE PRICE £119.99**

**MATSUI 21**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £219.99**

### TV'S - SAVE 200

**Panasonic M52R**  
14" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £169.99. **SALE PRICE £139.99**

**HITACHI 14T1**  
14" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £179.99. **SALE PRICE £149.99**

**SONY KV11T1**  
11" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £199.99. **SALE PRICE £159.99**

**Goldstar H1520**  
15" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £239.99**

**MATSUI 20M1**  
21" REMOTE CONTROL TV  
Was £359.99. **SALE PRICE £279.99**

### GRUNDIG ST 55725

**21" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT**

- 51cm visible screen size.
- Black matrix picture tube.
- 99 channels and 2xAV.
- NICAM digital stereo.

Was £329.99. **SALE PRICE £279.99**

**Dixons**

There's a great deal going on

TEL: 091-200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST BRANCH

### LARGE SCREEN TV'S - SAVE 100

**JVC 285X1**  
28" 3D-PROLOGIC DOLBY PRO-LOGIC TV  
Was £799.99. **SALE PRICE £699.99**

**MATSUI 20M1**  
21" TELETEXT TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL  
Was £189.99. **SALE PRICE £139.99**

**Panasonic 28T1**  
28" TELETEXT TV WITH REMOTE CONTROL  
Was £299.99. **SALE PRICE £199.99**

**SANYO 28T25**  
28" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT  
Was £399.99. **SALE PRICE £299.99**

**SONY 28T1**  
28" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT  
Was £499.99. **SALE PRICE £399.99**

### TV'S - SAVE 200

**Panasonic 21M1**  
21" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT  
Was £359.99. **SALE PRICE £259.99**

**HITACHI 2596**  
25" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT  
Was £429.99. **SALE PRICE £329.99**

**SONY 25T1**  
25" NICAM STEREO TV WITH FASTEXT  
Was £499.99. **SALE PRICE £399.99**

**Panasonic 28ADP**  
28" DOLBY PRO-LOGIC SURROUND SOUND TV  
Was £799.99. **SALE PRICE £599.99**

**TOSHIBA 28T1**  
28" DOLBY PRO-LOGIC SURROUND SOUND TV  
Was £799.99. **SALE PRICE £599.99**

# Diplomats attacked in Scott Report will not be prosecuted

Richard Horton-Taylor

**A** GROUP of senior diplomats and customs officers whose conduct in an arms-to-Iraq trial was severely criticised by judges will not be prosecuted because key Middle East witnesses have declined to co-operate, it has emerged.



Patrick Nixon, High Commissioner to Zambia

The Whitehall officials were attacked for persuading staff at the Iraqi and Jordanian embassies in London not to give evidence for the defence in the trial in 1985 of Reginald Dunk, director of Atlantic Commercial, an arms trading company, and Alexander Schlesinger, a consultant. The two men pleaded guilty to trying to sell 300 Sterling submachine-guns to Iraq via Jordan in breach of export control. They were fined a total of £28,000 but the convictions were later quashed. The Crown Prosecution Service confirmed yesterday it had decided "there was not sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction" for the prosecution of the officials.

It would not comment further. However, the Guardian has learned that Scotland Yard was unable to obtain adequate evidence from either the Iraqis or - more surprisingly perhaps - even Britain's friendly relations with Jordan - from the Jordanian embassy about the role of their diplomatic staff during the Dunk affair. A police report on the affair was sent to the CPS earlier this month. The British officials, named in the Scott Report and in a 1994 Court of Appeal judg-

# Trials show CS spray can contaminate police users

Alex Travis  
Home Affairs Editor

**P**OLICE officers can expect to be contaminated once every six months by their CS sprays, according to Home Office research. But the results of official trials on the new "incapacitants" show they are much less likely to cause injuries needing medical treatment than the US-style batons now being used by the police. Surveys for the Home Office found that two thirds of the public had heard of CS sprays, more were opposed to the spray than were against the baton. Most of those opposed were worried that the spray was not a safe deterrent. Although the trials provided no evidence that CS sprays caused serious injuries, they did identify problems for police using it. Those affected typically complained of pain or discomfort to the eyes and a burning sensation on the skin. One in 10 complained of breathing difficulties. The trials showed that the

average officer would use his spray four or five times a year, either to deal with public disorder or a domestic dispute. In trial areas, the spray was used more frequently than the baton. The researchers, however, found "frequent cross-contamination" with spray use, with officers affected about twice as often and more severely. Some officers drove their vehicles after being affected by their sprays, raising "questions of safety". The researchers said officers believed all police should be issued with spray, which they saw as a lesser use of force than a baton. They also raised concerns over training. Most officers were trained to shout a warning before using the spray, and this was often enough to control the situation. However, officers in several unnamed forces did not get this training, and "there are occasions when CS is sprayed where a verbal warning may have made this unnecessary". Police Research Group on CS trials; Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.



مكتبة من الامم



The Guardian Friday December 27 1996

Ronnie Scott

In the house of jazz

THE customers at Ronnie Scott's Soho jazz club knew him as a laconic, wise-cracking, chain-smoking loner in a leather jacket, the very model of a modern jazz musician.



Moves and grooves... Scott takes on Dizzy Gillespie at chess

But another image of Ronnie Scott, who has died aged 68, emerged with familiarity and time. It was of a complex, romantic, erudite and sometimes obsessive perfectionist of immense intuitive musicality, consuming love for the li-son spontaneity and offhand virtuosity of jazz, and an unpredictably anarchic wit worlds away from the steadily recycled and sometimes rather dubious stand-up routine he used as the front-man in "the office".

Scott presented himself publicly as a man nothing touched. There was one resounding exception, his respect and admiration for fellow jazz-players, in celebration of whose achievements he set up his club, and whose work he cherished in his own way. He insisted on respectful attention from audiences and meticulously name-checking every member of a guest band, whether famous or not.

Scott knew that jazz at its best was about the unique perceptions of improvising performers, a collective impact dependent both on stars and on the most unobtrusive of accompanists — not about interpretation of one artist's composition, for the most part cast in stone. He once called jazz "a music of fleeting emotions", but their very transitoriness was the quality he loved. A deeply emotional man himself, but one who concealed his feelings from almost everyone (and frequently from himself), Scott perhaps heard in the elegant, evaporating symmetries of jazz an urgent tension between the perfect and the ephemerally mortal, a chord that lay deep within him. Most jazz-lovers have heard a whisper of something like it.

Scott was himself a first saxophone player, respected for his rounded, faintly dolorous sound and improvising fluency by the best on the world stage, but it was the club that made his name internationally. The mix of upmarket supper-club intimacy and tatty low-life bohemia combined the priorities of Scott and his long-time friend, former saxophone partner and business associate Pete King, but neither man arrived at the chemistry by calculation or market research. Scott's yardstick was simply the kind of

place he would be happy to be occupying himself, with the emphasis on creating an environment that suited musicians, and which was devoted to appreciative listening (curt instructions to listen and not talk were issued on the tables, at Scott's behest). The inspiration for the atmosphere came from the 32nd Street New York jazz scene of the young Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis that Scott had visited in the forties and fifties (as an itinerant musician playing Atlantic liners), and from British surrealist comedy too. The mixture made the club unique.

Two years later, at the end of the war, Scott was hired by Ted Heath, leader of the best-known and most prosperous British dance orchestra of the day. Scott was eventually fired by Heath for missing a gig, but the real reason had been his enthusiasm for introducing the dance and newly-minted bebop style into what were supposed to be unburied and lyrical swing solos.

He felt the club 'family' was his natural circle, and built it into a gag: 'I love this club, it's just like home - filthy and full of strangers'

Scott and most of the dance-band and nightclub professionals of his own age were bored with dance music, and both the idiom and the hipster lifestyle of the New Yorkers of Charlie Parker's circle captivated them. In December 1945, a group of them opened a jazz basement club, the Club Eleven, to promote an all-bop policy. It closed 18 months later after a drug squad visit, and was celebrated later for the arresting officer's explanation to the court that bebop was: "a queer form of modern dancing... a negro jive".

The excitement of the Club Eleven gave Scott a dream, of a London nightclub that could house this unruly music and its growing body of fans. The pursuit went on to the back burner for much of the fifties when Scott became a successful bandleader, co-leading one of the most impressive of all early British big ensembles, the Jazz Couriers, with fellow-saxophonist Tubby Hayes. But in 1958 he opened the first jazz club to bear his name, a basement in Chinatown's Gerrard Street. Union rules had mostly prohibited American players working London clubs, and to begin with the booking policy was almost entirely local. But King, as business manager, persisted in negotiating with the American musicians' union who began to loosen the regulations, and when the hard rock boom of the sixties made UK players a draw on the festival circuit, an equal exchange finally threw open the door.

During the sixties, an extraordinary procession of jazz heroes and heroines crossed the ethered stage at 39 Gerrard Street, the names of Stan Getz, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Zoot Sims, Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Bill Evans, Dizzy Gillespie, virtually all of the jazz stars of the day save Miles Davis, who was never to play a season at Ronnie Scott club. Scott used to refer obliquely to Davis's intractability with the announcement: "That was a time by the great trumpeter Miles Davis, who once said to me 'Get out of the way'".

For British jazz musicians, struggling to get to the essence of an idiom imported from another culture, the regular appearances of the best improvisers in the world began a process of evolution that truly helped the UK jazz world find its own two feet. Scott would often sit at a side-table near the stage, watching and listening as carefully and respectfully as any non-playing member of his audience. And, sometimes (though deep anxieties about his unwelcome presence as a saxophonist would usually prevent him) he would jam with the stars as well. It may have been as a nightclub front-man that Scott got really big, but respect for his musicianship was one of the elements that took him there.

The club expanded in the sixties, to the present Frith Street premises. It weathered the eclipse of jazz in that decade, it prospered in its return to favour over the past 10 years, and it teetered on the edge of bankruptcy in between. In the eighties, an unlikely link with the Cuban music scene was forged, and Cuban jazz stars began to perform regularly at Frith Street. A second club opened in Birmingham in 1991. Scott's restless interior life hardly ever surfaced in that public place. He had several long relationships (two of which produced sons, Nicholas, and a daughter, Rebecca) but he felt that the "family" represented by the inner sanctum of his club

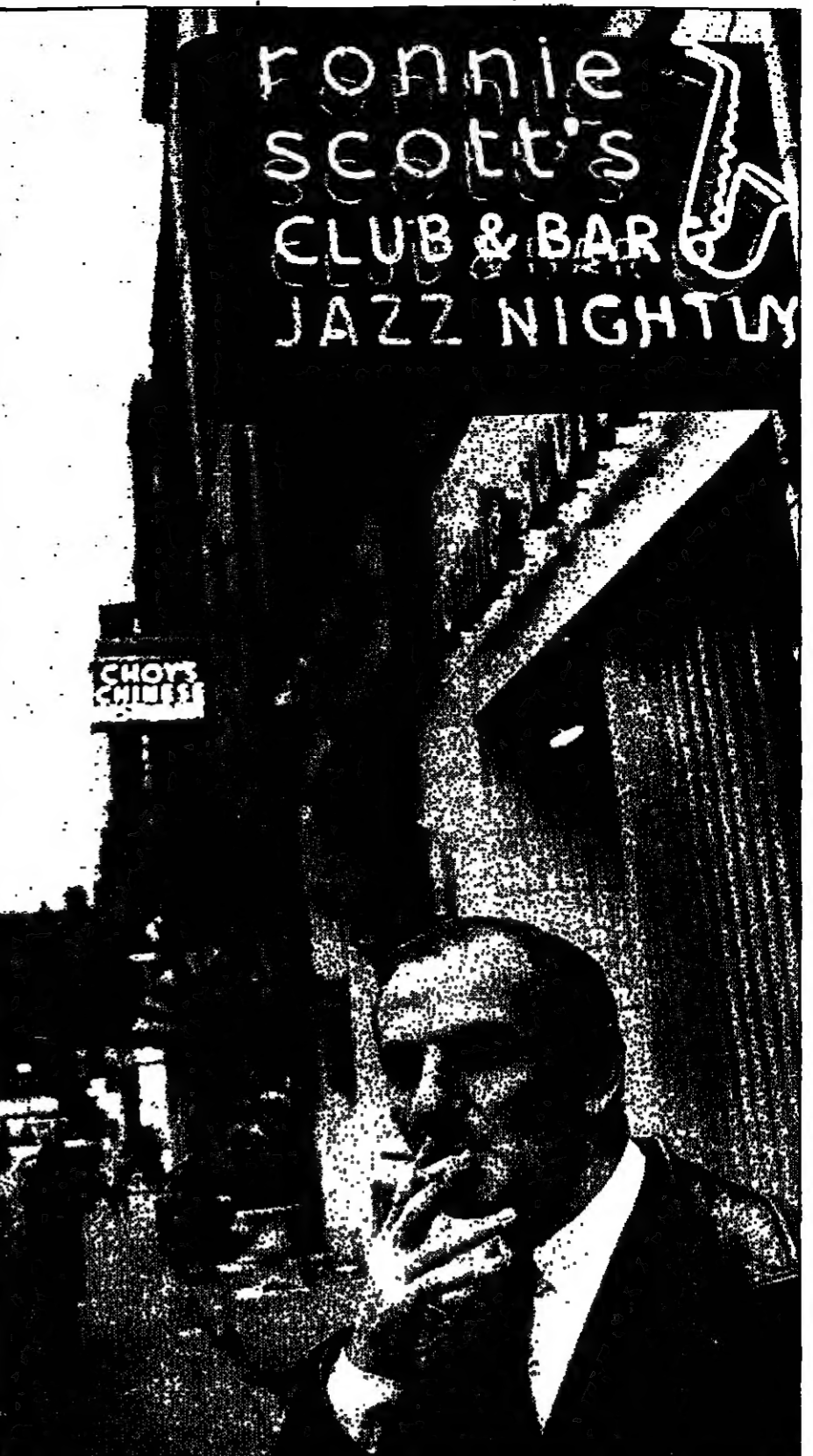
was his most natural circle, a perspective he built into one of his gags: "I love this club. It's just like home — filthy and full of strangers."

He could be dismissive, intimidating and self-preoccupied, and he could be generous, playful, and disarmingly modest. He could also bring the two roles engagingly together, as he did in recounting the story of a psychiatrist he once attended who fell asleep during his consultation. Scott appeared to regard shrinks like agents, attempting to represent particularly inept musicians, who are forced to listen, as he put it, to "hard-luck stories" all day.

HE LOVED jazz, and he loved the opera, chess, and just about any sport (though purely from a reclining position). When the 30th birthday of the club was celebrated in 1992, Scott prodded sentimental reflections and took refuge in the quip: "It's like a prison sentence. Thirty years in a jazz club." He had to be reminded of the remarkable role the place had played in the development of British jazz, and both he and King (a unique partnership even by the quirky professional standards of Soho nightlife) would contend that the drop-dead fortune that had kept the club afloat only existed because they didn't know what else to do. Currently, the club is as well as it ever has, despite Scott himself being off the premises for most of the past year with health difficulties, including the dental problems that stopped him playing in early 1995. London's home of jazz, still steered by Pete King, will probably redouble his efforts to celebrate his memory and the music that drove him.

John Dankworth once said that Ronnie Scott's had shown that a Soho nightclub could also be "a recital hall, a concert hall, a place of learning". Scott had also told this writer that it had been a chance for the greatest jazz stars, "to see that they were human, that they were wonderful, and that sometimes they fuck up like everybody else". It was a chance that transformed the lives of many people, inside and outside the music business, and for which Ronnie Scott may never be forgotten.

John Fordham  
Wal Wisner wrote: It wasn't easy being a woman jazz fan in 1960, but as soon as Ronnie realised I was sincere about the music and not just a "chick on the scene", the club became my home from home. From the days when it was just two tables and a grand piano, Ronnie and Pete King were giving me a hand. I remember the first time that Ronnie and I had a drink together at Frith Street. It was a great moment. Ronnie and I were sitting at a table and he was talking to me about the club. He was so friendly and welcoming. It was a real home away from home for me.



Clubbable... Scott in 1966 shortly after the "world's best jazz club" moved across Soho from Gerrard Street to Frith Street

clubby-hole office under the stairs for me to interview visiting artists, among them ex-patriate British vibraphonist Victor Feldman and Jamaican saxophonist Harold McNair. When he himself spoke to me early on for Jazz Journal, Ronnie, who always employed black staff at the club, enlightened me to the role in British jazz modernism that local black people had played. He also revealed an unexpected penchant for accuracy by insisting on correcting and adding my copy.

The Jimi Hendrix jam with Rahsaan Roland Kirk at Frith Street is an often-told story, but I remember even earlier magical nights at Gerrard Street session that paired saxophonists Sonny Stitt and Ronnie with guitarist Ernest

Raglin and fellow Jamaican Roy Burrows, here playing trumpet with Ray Charles; the debut of Charlie McGeoghegan's big band, forerunner of the Brotherhood of Breath. And there was the night I took bluesmen Memphis Slim and Big Joe Turner to sit in with saxophonist Ben Webster, and Gerry Mulligan joined in on baritone, all cheered on by a crowd of black exiles that included gospel singer Madeline Bell, the Manhattan Brothers and other South Africans from the musical King Kong. On such nights you would swear that, as the jazz cliché has it, God was in the house.

Ronnie and Pete King instinctively knew who the good guys were, even when some aspects of their behaviour might have been unacceptable elsewhere. Who else would have tolerated an artist who missed the odd set or fell off the bandstand? But for Ronnie, the praise-singers of African-America were consummate heroes who could do little wrong. In return, he expected loyalty and got it — from employees and friends, supporters and punters. When I failed to visit for a long period of time, I mumbled my apologies. "Don't worry," said Pete, "you're family." And so, a family mourns. We mourn a man whose admiration for the poignancy, resilience and creativity of black music translated into untold hours of joy and pleasure for others.

Ronnie Scott, musician and club-owner, born January 28, 1927; died December 23, 1996

Ted Leadbitter

The Labour MP who outed Blunt



Leadbitter... outspoken

THE death at 77 of Ted Leadbitter, Peter Mandelson's predecessor as Labour MP for Hartlepool for 28 years, ended a combative career based on local issues but sprinkled with national celebrity.

Leadbitter so enjoyed the notoriety that, in his last year as an MP he sought to have the self-confessed "fifth man", John Cairncross, deprived of his pension as an MI6 official. Leadbitter was born in Durham, an Eastington miner's son, and trained at Cheltenham Teachers' Training College. He was a wartime RAF officer

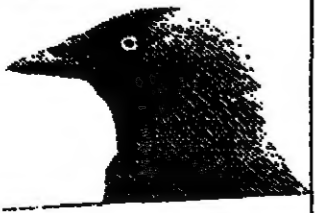
and instructor, then taught at a Hartlepool secondary modern. A Labour Party member from 1938, in 1954 he was elected to West Hartlepool council. His great disappointment came when the local party later refused to elect him mayor, for fear of losing their one-seat majority. In 1963 he was selected for the Hartlepool seat, then occupied by Tory MP Commander Kerans.

When Kerans decided to stand down, Leadbitter charged him with being afraid of defeat in the looming election. After Leadbitter won the seat in 1964, he focused on local issues. He sent a barrage of protests to Tony Benn, postmaster-general in the new Wilson government, to force the removal of a telephone pole planted in a constituency front garden. Having been a big fish in his local council pool, he never quite adjusted to being a small fish at Westminster. He took to writing incredibly long letters to Harold Wilson, giving advice on almost everything. Sometimes his views were shrilly voiced from the back benches, without his Labour colleagues being able to decide whether he was left, right or centre.

There was puzzlement too in Hartlepool, where he favoured nuclear power at Sellafield, despite being a miner's son. In parliament, he served on the select committee on science and technology for a decade from 1969 and then accompanied the port serving Teess and Hartlepool. The left-wing duo, Dennis Skinner and the late Bob Cryer egged him on as he savaged incompetent local authorities and the greedy Tory government for pocketing half the proceeds.

The serious car crash which preceded his death came weeks after the death of Phyllis, his wife of 56 years. They leave behind a son and a daughter. Andrew Roth  
Edward Leadbitter, politician, born June 18, 1919; died December 24, 1996

Jackdaw



It's all over

Q: WHAT is the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement? A: VHEMT (pronounced vehment) is a movement not an organisation. It's a movement to carry out the extinction of humankind. We're not just a bunch of misanthropes and anti-social, Malthusian misfits, taking morbid delight whenever disaster strikes humans. Nothing could be further from the truth. Voluntary human extinction is the humanitarian alternative to human disasters. We don't carry on about how the human race has shown itself to be a greedy,

amoral parasite on the once-healthy face of this planet. That type of negativity offers no solution to the inexorable horrors which human activity is causing. Rather, the Movement presents an encouraging alternative to the callous exploitation and wholesale destruction of the Earth's ecology. As VHEMT volunteers know, the only alternative to the extinction of millions, probably billions, of species of plants and animals is the voluntary extinction of one species: Homo sapiens... us.

Each time another one of us decides to not add another one of us to the burgeoning billions already squatting on this ravaged planet, another ray of hope shines through the gloom. When every human chooses to stop breeding, Earth will be allowed to return to its former glory, and all creatures will be free to live, die, evolve (if they believe in evolution), and perhaps pass away, as so many of Mother Nature's "experiments" have done throughout the eons. Good

health will be restored to the Earth's ecology... to the life form known by many as Gaia. A New Year's resolution not many of us will be taking up. VHEMT Homepage is at [www.vehmt.org/](http://www.vehmt.org/)

Take a toke

WHEN I smoked frequently (in college) I happened to be thinking a lot about spirituality at the same time, and I came up with some hypotheses about the morality of what I was doing to begin with. I was influenced by Lacan's view of the subject, because that is created by the difference between the speaker and the speaker's place in the language structure. In terms of spirituality: I personally believe the concept of God exists as a cultural idea that appeals to subconsciousnesses of groups of people. That is why it is vague: because the subconsciousnesses create God aren't fully understood in the language structure. Now if the subconscious is also the place to which spir-

uality appeals, then to study your spirituality you must study your subconsciousness. I believe that smoking marijuana can help you study your subconsciousness. Here's why: language is what creates meaning, and the subconscious is that which is not expressed through language. When one smokes, one is temporarily distanced from the language structure.

I personally believe that the best way to worship God is, rather than asking for favours or forgiveness, to try to understand God. One can do this by praying in a church, by talking to a minister, by singing praises, by analysing the concept of God intellectually, or, if my hypothesis is correct, by trying to understand your subconscious connections to God, while smoking. So smoking marijuana could help you understand God, not in a traditional questioning way, but also in a personal, contemporary and very living way: by helping you understand exactly what "God" is, in your mind. This isn't to say, of course, that mari-

juana can't be abused or over-used. But if used correctly, it could make the concept of God more real than if you hadn't lit one up. Parts of the above argument could also help explain why the strength of the cultural idea that smoking marijuana is wrong: individualism may be treasured among the concepts of America, but a lack of accountability to society is not. If smoking does move you away from the structured order, then that is a very real threat to that structured order. I would wonder if it would be good for the world as a whole to have a large segment of the population spending their time in isolated introspection without having a productive goal for that introspection. For example, if you sit around smoking up and watching TV all the time, is that really — from a moral, ethical perspective — good? If, however, you use smoking as a tool for helping you understand the world, your thoughts, your approach to things, even God, and make an effort to relate what you've understood to the social structure when you've done, then I believe that smok-

ing marijuana is not only morally benign, it is morally laudable. So go ahead. Smoke a joint for Jesus! Obligatory composed while high. Smoke a Joint, for Jesus is at [www.paranoia.com/drugs/stories/marijuana/join-for-jesus.txt](http://www.paranoia.com/drugs/stories/marijuana/join-for-jesus.txt)

Dress down

ACTIVELY bad dressing may be an art raised to its highest



Vogue... bad dressing

form in England, but it is not within the reach of all as it requires a keen, if misplaced, interest in fashion. Many of us lack such enthusiasm. The majority of Englishwomen regard the photographs in fashion magazines as having as much pertinence to them as the ones in National Geographic of Guatemalan tree frogs. They will continue to affect the costume of timeless dowdiness, usually involving a blazer and a floral skirt, that may be seen on all occasions when Englishwomen have consciously dressed up.

And yet, this costume is more interesting than it looks, because it has more than a sartorial relevance to the Englishwoman. It has developed as a response to the two test pronouncements invariably posed by Englishwomen when they are about to buy something. The first, somewhere between an oath and a plea, is "it will last forever." This remark, which can be heard issuing from changing rooms the length of the country, and which indicates

Birthdays

- Irene Adams, Labour MP, 48; Anne Armstrong, former US ambassador to Britain, 68; Christopher Benjamin, actor, 62; John Charles, footballer, 65; Gerard Depardieu, actor, 48; Pat Moses, former rally driver, 62; Prof Donald Northcote, plant biochemist, 75; Mike Pender, rock singer, 64; Peter Quafie, rock musician, 53; Prof Brinley Rees, classical scholar, 77; Dr Edward Saatchi, journalist, University College, Durham, 61; Wilfrid Sheed, author, 68; David Shepherd, cricket umpire, 58; Lord Sterling, chairman, P & O, 62; Janet Street-Porter, broadcaster, 62; Polly Toynbee, journalist and broadcaster, 50; Dr Rev Michael Turnbull, Bishop of Durham, 61; Brig Dame Mary Tyrwhitt, former director, the WRAC, 93.

Emily Sheffield

## Judges can't be masons

If Sir Frederick won't come clean, he must go

THE POLICE Superintendents' Association expressed reservations over a compulsory register of masonic membership yesterday. It was an important reservation: if it was introduced for the police, it should also be applied to the other arms of the criminal justice system — the criminal prosecution service lawyers, judges, and members of the Police Complaints Authority. Here is an issue which deserves a place on any new government's agenda: the need to end the suspicions which police and other public service staff generate when they join secret organisations. The text could be taken from last month's announcement by the Association of Chief Police Officers calling for more transparency in public service. The chief constables want all officers who are freemasons to register their involvement, are urging all such officers to give up their membership and have also declared their intention to lobby ministers to set up a compulsory register. They were backed yesterday by the Police Complaints Authority, which called for a compulsory register in its evidence to the Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs which is carrying out an inquiry into freemasonry.

A police register looks inevitable. It is now 12 years since the then Metropolitan Commissioner warned police officers of the dangers of joining the masons. He pointed to the oaths which freemasons made — oaths which carried implications that "loyalty to fellow freemasons may supersede any other loyalty". The warning won the immediate support of the chief constables of Greater Manchester and North Wales. His two successors have followed suit and now the chief constables' club has signed up too. Yet the transparency principle which the chief constables want to apply to their officers — it is not confined to freemasons but applies to other secret organisations, such as

the Catholic sect, Opus Dei, too — should apply with equal force to prosecutors and judges. Earlier this month, the Association of Women Barristers expressed concern about the damage which masonic membership on the bench causes to public confidence in the impartiality of the judiciary. They are also worried by masonic influence in judicial appointments, which because of the "secret soundings" carried out by the Lord Chancellor's Department, makes it easier for networks like freemasonry to push friends.

There is an even more immediate issue for the parliamentary committee: the appointment of Sir Frederick Crawford to lead the Criminal Cases Review Authority, the new agency to examine possible miscarriages of justice. If it is desirable for police officers and judges to avoid masonic membership, it is even more important that an agency designed to restore public faith in the criminal justice system should be seen to be above any possible outside interference. Yet, absurdly, as the Guardian revealed in August, the Home Secretary has appointed a mason to lead this crucial new body. Moreover, suspicion remains that the masonic was not even aware of the masonic membership when the appointment was made. The Lord Chancellor's Department has acknowledged it does not question judicial candidates about such membership. Home Office ministers have refused to say whether Sir Frederick was asked about — or revealed — his masonic membership but the department has said all applicants for other places on the new agency were asked. Sir Frederick has refused to give any explanations but will appear before the parliamentary committee in the new year. His silence only reinforces the doubts over his suitability. A voluntary resignation was resisted. Can the MPs achieve an involuntary one?



### Letters to the Editor

## Why the moral right is wrong

THE fact that Anne Atkins rose to fame on a tide of homophobia indicates that she has touched a chord in a society yearning for the good old days of open prejudice, xenophobia and intolerance. (Charge of the right and proper brigade, December 23). But the key is that our society has a problem with children. It treats them like aliens: to be feared, misunderstood, controlled and punished.

Earlier this month, I read Mrs Atkins's advice to do, or when you want them to do, or when you just can't control yourself. Small wonder that so many kids are engaged in violence, truancy, bullying and other disruptive activities.

(Dr) Effrat Tveitson, Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds LS1 5HE.

WHAT makes Anne Atkins's moral right so problematic for the rest of us is that they make it all seem so easy. Your child is naughty? Smack him. Your marriage has died and love lies somewhere else? Stick with the dead marriage. All your sexually-conscious life you've been attracted to your own gender? Ignore it.

There is a thought for the child's reasons for behaving badly, for the consequences in your relationship with him or her, not a moment's bother with the quality of love between adults in an intimate relationship, no time for real feelings, real respect for your individual self, or real listening to the unique voice of the other person.

The legacy of the sixties need not be "permissiveness", whatever that is. It can be an understanding of ourselves, of other people and of the relationship between the two.

Allison Leonard, 6 Todland Grove, Chester CH2 2EY.

LUKE Harding observes that "what distinguishes new moralists like Anne Atkins is that they project themselves with chilling efficiency as representatives of mainstream opinion". One of the main reasons why they are so successful in this respect is that certain newspapers are only too happy to grant them vast amounts of column space which are out of all proportion to their authors' representativeness of the views of the population as a whole. This has more to do with the profound conservatism of most of our papers than with any widespread renaissance of fundamentalist moral values.

Nor is it accurate to state that "a new counter-culture is on the march". During the allegedly "swinging" sixties the papers currently promoting Atkins et al and exhorting Michael Grade were full of jeremiads about "permissiveness", puts for Mary Whitehouse and attacks on BBC chief Sir Hugh Greene for allowing "filth" onto our TV screens.

Having just completed a study of the ever-growing army of Britain's press columnists, I have become more than ever convinced that most of Britain's newspapers are first and foremost newspapers, that the range of views on offer is extraordinarily narrow and limited, and that the promulgation of

these views seems to take precedence over everything else — including the balance sheet.

(Dr) Julian Petley, Dept of Human Sciences, Brunel University, Kingston Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3PH.

THE laws of Moses commanded that women caught in adultery be stoned to death. Jesus, confronting a crowd that wanted to do just that, asked each individual to examine their consciences and only if they found them clear to accuse others of sin.

I therefore assume that, as a good Christian, Anne Atkins has examined her conscience and found herself as pure and good and innocent as her Lord.

She will also have arrived at a perfect understanding of his will, an understanding that surpasses what is merely written in the Bible of her faith. In that book, there is little evidence of the sinfulness of the homosexuality she has condemned, while Jesus advocates tolerance frequently — not only for the woman taken in adultery.

Robert Seaton, Kundratka 2, Praha 8, Liben, Czech Republic.

### Cold comfort in bleak houses

GORGE Monbiot's excellent article (Bleak House, December 24) is rightly critical of the Department of the Environment's five-year delay in publishing the shocking energy figures from the 1991 House Condition Survey. But the misery and cost consequences of unheated houses are even greater than he suggests.

Cold houses result in condensation which, in turn, results in mould growth. Spores from these moulds are a proven cause of asthma, especially in children, and other illnesses. Apart from the excess winter deaths, the direct cost to the health service of cold and damp-induced illness exceeds £1 billion a year, in addition to the costs of educational and production losses resulting from this.

When the deterioration of the housing stock, the ruination of decorations, furnishings and personal possessions, and the costs to social services and housing administration are added, the total would go a long way over, say, 10 years to meet the necessary investment to raise the UK's housing stock to a standard comparable to that of our North European neighbours.

Thomas A Markus, Emeritus Professor of Building Science, University of Strathclyde, 3 Whitehill Gardens, Glasgow G12 9XD.

IN the New Year, a cross-party group of MPs will introduce to Parliament the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation (15-Year Programme) Bill. Once the Bill will mandate successive governments to insulate effectively 500,000 homes a year for 15 years.

The payback will be huge. Conservatively, up to 50,000 new jobs will be created through manufacturing, installing, servicing and repairing a range of energy-conservation goods and materials. The Treasury and taxpayers will gain some £9,000 per year for every person escaping the cold queues. Following this, emissions will tumble and domestic fuel bills will fall. Tens of thousands of lives will be saved every winter.

This is no millennium fantasy. But Treasury short-termism will only be overcome if citizens — i.e. voters and taxpayers — demand that the Bill becomes law.

Charles Secrett, Director, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ.

## Scenting a speedy victory

Labour must not be deflected from its anti-hunting stance

THE UNSPOKEN word among the unspokeable as they gathered to pursue the unseatable in their traditional Boxing Day foxhunts yesterday was that, because of the likelihood of a Labour government, this might be the last time they experienced the pleasures of the chase in this way. As it turned out, gathering was all they were able to do on this occasion; this was because freezing temperatures made the ground too solid for horseriding and all but one of the hunts monitored by the League Against Cruel Sports were cancelled. League spokesman Kevin Saunders claimed that only the Royal Artillery Hunt was able to ride out on Salisbury Plain, although it also gave up early at 2pm after catching one fox. Hunters fear the election of a Labour government for the simple reason that Labour activists have never been more opposed to hunting than they are today. A large Labour majority at the general election would virtually guarantee the passage of an anti-hunting Private Member's Bill in the new Parliament.

Earlier this week, the hunters saw a glimmer of hope when an unourced article in the Daily Telegraph suggested that Labour wanted to postpone the issue by appointing a two-year inquiry into field sports before submitting any legislation to parliament. Given what has happened to so many other Labour pledges this year, it all sounded very plausible. But not this time. The story was based more on hope than on fact — even though Tony Blair's closest ad-

viser is a hunter — and was rapidly rebutted out of existence by the Labour leader's office on Christmas Eve.

The Telegraph story was quite possibly planted by Labour's pro-hunting minority in the hope that a few well-publicised examples of Boxing Day misbehaviour yesterday by saboteurs might help to bounce the party into a nervous denial of its existing pledge. It wasn't an entirely impossible scenario until bad weather stopped play yesterday. But Labour should beware of running for cover on hunting in spite of a good deal of white propaganda (like the Bicester hunt follower interviewed on BBC radio yesterday, who claimed that some people hunted the same fox year and year again so easy was it for a cunning fox to shake off its galloping pursuers).

The hunting lobby still hopes that even if Labour sticks to its plans — notwithstanding an intensified lobbying campaign to persuade it to do otherwise — the parliamentary timetable would make it highly unlikely that the Bill would become law before next year's Christmas hunt. Maybe. This is one of the very few public issues on which young voters, apathetic about so much else, are aroused to genuine commitment. A party which abandoned a pledge of this kind would win very few extra votes in rural England while losing millions of disillusioned urban votes among the very generations on whom it will most rely for electoral success.

Violence towards children only teaches them that violence is a legitimate language to use against people who don't do what you want them to do, or when you just can't control yourself. Small wonder that so many kids are engaged in violence, truancy, bullying and other disruptive activities.

(Dr) Effrat Tveitson, Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds LS1 5HE.



### Christmas spirit

ALEX Brummer is right that a fair tax system will test Tony Blair's Christian Socialist credentials (Economic Notebook, December 24).

A resolution passed unanimously at the recent Church of England's Faith in the City conference stated: "We should work for policies which provide resources through higher rates of taxation for those earning more, and far more rigorous corporate taxation".

My plea to politicians before the general election is that we have a responsible debate about taxation. Christmas is not a bad time to start it as it was a Roman taxation exercise that was responsible for Jesus's birth at Bethlehem.

(Dr) Rev) Roger Sainsbury, Bishop of Barking, 110 Capel Road, London E7 0JS.

### A tale of two venues in the worst of times

WHAT you omit to mention in your report about Sir John Hall's plans for the biggest stadium in Europe for Newcastle United Football Club (Newcastle Evening Chronicle, December 20) is the loss of city-centre green areas, including two parks, allotments and open moorland if his plans go ahead. In the heart of Newcastle, a fishing pier, a new play area and hundreds of trees would disappear.

You quote Sir John as saying "We're very conscious of the kids can't get in" but most "kids" won't get in however big the stadium, since a season ticket costs £200. Going to "the match" is likely to remain a dream for most people living on Tyneside. There are areas of derelict wasteland in the city which could be used for his new stadium but Sir John wants this prime green site and is bullying the city council with threats to take the development to Gatashead if he cannot have his own way.

Lia Harwood, 2 Burnside, Spital Tongues, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 4LN.

YOUR details of the national pop music centre in Sheffield are too bad to be true (Sheffield scores a pop music triumph, December 20). Not only is London the logical place since the large local population can nip round all the time, but round enclaves are, with square ones, the worst shapes for concert halls — prime example, the Albert Hall.

I am beginning to be seriously concerned by the British failure to produce a top international concert-hall designer or hire foreign ones. There is a lot wrong with the Albert Hall and the Barbican, while the Festival Hall is beginning to look mediocre.

Moreover, architects are too busy being "original" to use the best method of concert-hall design, which is to copy an existing, successful hall. This is the secret of the Wigmore Hall, for instance.

Bernard Jones, 8 New Cavendish Street, London W1M 7LJ.

### New front opens in pensions war

LORD MacKay of Arduachan is dissembling (Letters, December 23). He will be aware of the recent Early Day Motion, which had the support of 280 MPs, across the parties, supporting the creation of a sub-department of Ex-service Affairs within an existing ministry. This, hardly looks as if they are satisfied that veterans are being given the treatment to which they should be entitled.

The Government washed its hands of this matter by saying that somehow this would deprive the rest of society. It seems to many ex-service people that the Government is totally ignoring the unique demands made on members of the armed forces, which, in some cases, have resulted in unforeseen and unfortunate consequences.

Gulf War Syndrome is a case in point in which the Government has had to make a complete U-turn. Deafness caused by military services is another area in which the Government is seen to have been less than frank. The lack of compensa-

### A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: It is good news that no more sand is to be extracted from Druridge Bay and the threat of a nuclear power station has been lifted. After two days of strong winds, I went down to Cresswell with my jute sack for pickings of shells, wood for the fire and odd pieces of sea coal. Where the tiny creek of Emscote voids into the North Sea, small areas of fossilised forest had been exposed. This area was once a stretch of woodland and, as the tide draws out, skeleton roots of ancient trees in a half-way stage between peat and carboniferous substance are exposed. Sixty whooper swans arrived at Druridge from Russia last month and I see them fly over the dunes to Cresswell pond. Mostly, they stay in compact flocks feeding on local rape fields. "They'll go back to Russia in March," the warden at Low Hauxley told me. He walks this Northumberland Wildlife Trust reserve at first light every morning and told me that a short-eared owl had arrived from Scandinavia; he sees it regularly on the dunes and in the plantation. He also reports several migrating woodcock and a bar-tailed godwit on the foreshore as well as the over-wintering birds from the tundra, red-shank and knots. "We have a resident fox on the dunes but he leaves the birds alone and hunts the rabbits," the warden said. "He doesn't like getting his feet wet." During my walk, I see two heron fishing for scraps on seaweed-covered rocks and in the pools which the outgoing tide has left. In my Dictionary of British Natural History, they are described as marshland birds, but they no longer have frogs and freshwater fish in marshes to resort to and seem to have abandoned communal identification in this county. Instead, they haunt marine and riverine habitat. My dogs disturb a scoter duck haunting the shoreline. Described as a "raft" of duck, they spring into the air in flustered parties.

VERONICA HEATH

## Lower speeds will save lives

Why doesn't the Government have more 20mph limits now?

BRITAIN has a good record in recent years of reducing the number of serious accidents on our roads, including accidents to children. But good doesn't mean good enough. A total of 133 child pedestrians were killed on the roads in 1995, one of the worst child fatality rates in Europe. Such improvement as there has been has been achieved by action on a broad front, including drinking and driving curbs, internal improvements to cars (like safety belts and air bags) and the enforcement of speed limits. Now it is time for a fresh initiative to cut the unacceptably high number of accidents to children where there is a straight trade-off between death, speed and preventive safety measures. Ironically, the recent fall in child deaths on the roads isn't a sign that roads are getting safer but that they are getting more dangerous — because far fewer children, particularly of primary school age, travel to school by them-

selves. During the last 20 years, the proportion of seven to eight-year-olds allowed to travel to school without adult supervision has fallen from 80 per cent to less than 10 per cent. According to the Transport Research Laboratory, road accidents involving schoolchildren have been cut by 67 per cent at 200 of the 20-mile-an-hour traffic calming sites that the TRL has been monitoring.

The 20mph areas reduced average speeds by 9.3mph and encouraged more parents to allow their children to cycle to work (thereby freeing them from having to make unnecessary car journeys). If 20mph speed limits were monitored by automatic speed cameras — which have a salutary effect on those caught by them — then there would be considerable scope to reduce accidents to children further and encourage the return of the bicycle as a healthy, cost-effective means of transport.

### Lower speeds will save lives

I AM outraged that not one train is running (except to airports) on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. If two days of national mourning had been caused by strikes not privatised industry, I'm sure some politicians would complain.

J Wilson, 3 Avondale Road, Bromley BR1 4DT.

YOU report (December 24) that Tony Blair has quashed any plans for a 50p tax rate for those on £100,000 a year. Does anyone being paid £100,000 actually earn it? They simply award themselves huge salaries — no negotiations necessary.

Peter R C Hammond, 14 Fulford Hill Road, Solihull B90 1QY.

HOW frightening that Bill Anderson of BNF plc (Letters, December 21) cannot see the danger of extra aerial discharge, however small, from Seelfield. There should be no radioactive discharge either into the sea or the air.

J Morgan, 19 Melrose Road, London SW13 9LG.

### Lower speeds will save lives

PLEASE include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mails; otherwise we may edit them; shorter ones are more likely to appear.

طاب الله من الامم

Diary

Matthew Norman

As we devote ourselves to seasonal pleasure, spare a thought, please, for the selfless men and women waiting around the corner with the breathalyzers...

After peace on earth, no surrender as usual

Commentary

Peter Preston

WELL, that's two days of Peace on Earth over. It may now be appropriate to observe that the Lord, as represented by His various earthly followers...

where. The killing streets are about to re-open for bloody business.

play on exactly the same terms. Peace isn't a priority. The spin doctors park it at the back of their shelves.

not change their ancient allegiances — but merely confirm them. This year, perhaps, a few more may switch from Trimble to Paisley...

Did Mr Spring think that, as he passed through Jerusalem? As he watched Benjamin Netanyahu, a relatively modern-seeming man, did he catch a glimpse of David Trimble?

Democracies may find it very difficult to go to war: but when they do, they find the peace even more difficult

think amid the burgeoning skyscrapers, hotels and bustling economy of Greek Cyprus? Here is prospectively the simplest peace of them all.

around them is elusive. The UN has brokered a prospective settlement over decades. But who will be brave enough to seize it? Who will explain the necessary compromises?

It requires great resolution — as from the thousands of Serbs who march through Belgrade day by day — or the imperative of great pressure.

And Northern Ireland? Prepare to despair. The British Government exerts no steady pressure, more bi-partisan anxiety. It pays the bills, loads on the subsidies.

I heard Robert Eames, the Anglican Primate of All Ireland, doing his own Peace on Earth tour this Christmas. Bosnia, the West Bank — why not Ireland? Ah, he said, we are different, such a small close-knit community...

Home for the holidays with New Labour



Bel Littlejohn

HAPPY Christmas? Hardly. Last week's column, you'll remember, gave the reader a stunning insight into the psychology of present-giving, warning women away from those men who give them luxury or household items...

Others will all be here in a sec. Orange or Diet Coke? Or something stronger, just so long as you're not driving? The Folettis made themselves at home...

"Great training for the General Election," I agreed. At that moment — just as Ken was picking up his electric guitar to move us all with his version of Knockin' On Heaven's Door...

I won't delineate the parameters of our subsequent discussion — I'm a very private person away from award-winning columns — but after repeated cross-questioning it emerged that he hadn't bothered to read last week's column — not even once.

Something on the sports pages, he said, had "caught his eye". What? "Wrestling". Wrestling? I couldn't believe it. The times I've argued — forcefully, cogently, without losing my cool — that wrestling is a barbaric sport full of male testosterone...

JACK was a little concerned. "Should that infant really be up so late? Parents must be taught responsibility for their children's actions. And that crib is a potential health-hazard. It certainly wouldn't comply with household hygiene regulations under a New Labour government."

Barbara wondered if Mary really looked best in blue, while Harriet couldn't help missing about Mary and Joseph's decision not to upgrade their accommodation. "I mean, if you know three financially secure kings, it's quite simply unfair on the less-well-off not to avail yourself of the opportunity to opt out of the already overburdened public sector. For heaven's sake, let's not play politics with our kiddies' lives," she argued, forcefully.

The subsequent discussion took my mind off my ex-bloke, involving me in the real process of decision-making. 1997 is the year to put our old Tory problems behind us, and to find some new ones to enjoy under New Labour. Cheers!

Rotten Apple

and remember, it only takes one to poison the whole barrel — goes to the uniformed officers of Wath, South Yorkshire, where two CID colleagues briefly left their jobs to find coffee unattended early this year...

Race for the Golden Deer

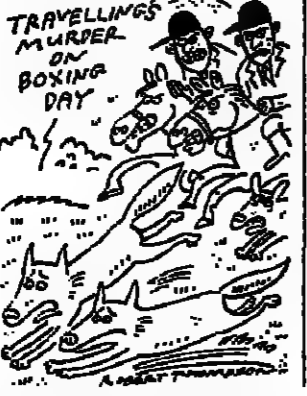
Three racing pigeons (tagged, grey, Can) identified by cooling-type noise. The winner, however, is PC Reif, who while on attachment to Telford CID filled in a form about a suspect's appearance. His answers in the section on facial hair are shown in italics. Try moustache. Colour: black. Description: top of lips.

Many a beat officer

fan basis of becoming a top detective, but few have the skills to make that dream come true. One who does is PC Dean Cunningham of Albany Street nick, which is in central London. He wins the Scarlet Pimpernel Cup for being a masterful Cloak and Dagger. When officers were unable to execute a search warrant on a building to which the only entry point was a huge steel door, which was very closed, PC Cunningham had a brainwave. He went to the trouble of borrowing a post-man's uniform, put it on, strode up to the door and knocked hard. "Who is it?" called a voice from within. "It's the police," said a Constable Cunningham.

Keystone commenda-

tion goes to Jim McAuley of Strathclyde. Approached by a local worried that a dog was trapped inside an electronic advertising board in a bus station, he investigated and indeed heard the yelping of a puppy. Just as PC McAuley was about to kick out a spaniel to free the animal, a shopkeeper raced over to stop him. "That's about the wee dog?" said PC McAuley. "That's a wee dog." That's a sound effect for a video of 101 Dalmatians.



Tony Banks hands out his own awards to the year's parliamentary superheroes

Beyond our Ken

AT THE best of times, the House of Commons is an odd-ball place full of even odder people, but at present it has become surreal. We are all living on borrowed time.

Among the Tories brave faces abound but many know, or suspect, that they are already numbered with the politically undead and simply waiting for termination day to be announced. But politicians, just like football supporters, travel optimistically and are always hoping something momentous is just about to happen.

Other than the public hanging of Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner, what more could Labour do to reassure Middle England of our fitness to govern? But despite all this, the nagging doubt remains. Can we really trust the electorate? Of course they are concerned about unemployment, homelessness, poverty etc. And, yes, they do want to spend more on hospitals, schools and transport — until it's their turn to do something.

background of cynicism that Ken Clarke wins my nomination as Parliamentarian of the Year. There is something very appealing about a politician who apparently doesn't give a damn about what his colleagues think of him and actually seems to enjoy flaunting the fact.

credit to a St Bernard. So, by a short and very brown nose, Michael Fabricant gets my overall nomination as Backbencher of the Year.

in fact, it's always someone else's fault. Journalists blame the politicians, the politicians blame each other and the electorate blames them all. It is against such a

strangled language of our dear Home Secretary outlining his latest 30-something-point plan to deal with crime — and that after 17 years of government by the self-anointed party of law and order? Only someone like Michael Howard, who has had his sense of irony surgically removed, would fall to blush even as he utters the things he does.

For inventiveness and imagination, my nomination for Backbencher of the Year goes to Newport West Labour MP, Paul Flynn. For sheer consistency this (and probably every other year), honours go to Dennis Skinner.

My final category is that of the Steve Norris Survivor of the Year award. Initially, I was tempted to give it to Neil Hamilton — who could so easily have been tempted to accept it — but once again, even at this late stage of the game, it goes to John Major.

It was a triumph of survival against all the political odds and one the Labour Party would do well to note. After all, we got caught out trying to fix the Radio 4 Personality of the Year award for someone with a personality but the Tories did it for someone without one. Peter Mandelson has a lot to learn in the next four months.

There is something very appealing about a politician who doesn't give a damn about what his colleagues think of him

Other than the public hanging of Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner, what more could Labour do to reassure Middle England of our fitness to govern? But despite all this, the nagging doubt remains. Can we really trust the electorate? Of course they are concerned about unemployment, homelessness, poverty etc. And, yes, they do want to spend more on hospitals, schools and transport — until it's their turn to do something.

in fact, it's always someone else's fault. Journalists blame the politicians, the politicians blame each other and the electorate blames them all. It is against such a

strangled language of our dear Home Secretary outlining his latest 30-something-point plan to deal with crime — and that after 17 years of government by the self-anointed party of law and order? Only someone like Michael Howard, who has had his sense of irony surgically removed, would fall to blush even as he utters the things he does.

For inventiveness and imagination, my nomination for Backbencher of the Year goes to Newport West Labour MP, Paul Flynn. For sheer consistency this (and probably every other year), honours go to Dennis Skinner.

My final category is that of the Steve Norris Survivor of the Year award. Initially, I was tempted to give it to Neil Hamilton — who could so easily have been tempted to accept it — but once again, even at this late stage of the game, it goes to John Major.

SAVE £200 BEST DIGITAL DEAL. NOKIA 1610. FREE 2 MONTHS LINE RENTAL WORTH £220 VAT. FREE 20 MINUTES OF CALLS PER MONTH FOR FIRST 3 MONTHS. FREE LEATHER CARRY CASE. 100 HOUR BATTERY. FREE next day delivery.

Suzanne Goldenberg meets formerly high-flying female workers from Kabul, forced out of their jobs by edicts of the ruling Taliban

# Women wait to lift veil of silence

**S**HAFIQA Habibi was once the face of Afghanistan. The longest-serving announcer on state radio and television, she has become the invisible woman confined to her home by a Taliban edict that forbids women to work, and by the fear of venturing into the uncertain streets of a ruined city.

In the three months since the Taliban captured Kabul, Ms Habibi has left her flat four times to collect her salary and to attend funerals. On each occasion, she put on *chadereh*, a head-to-toe shroud with a filigree pattern over the eyes. "I used to wear one of these if I didn't want to be recognised," she laughs. "Every time I went out children would run after me, call-

ing my name. I enjoyed the fame at first, but then it became a burden." Her daughter, a school-teacher also forced to stay at home, reverently hands around photographs from the

Afghanistan — renamed Radio Shari'a — for slip-ups by her former trainees. "I get upset, it's so bad," she says. However, Ms Habibi does not despair. Having survived several regimes since she

diga Siddique, an architect who was removed as the director of the Polytechnic Institute, argues that the harsh regime of the Taliban cannot endure. "A movement, no matter how strong, is just a movement. It does not last forever," she says. "God willing, we won't be at home like this forever. It's the beginning of the Taliban era. No one knows what will happen."

Like most high-profile women in Kabul, Ms Habibi and Ms Siddique have gone to ground since September. Many of their former colleagues are convinced they have fled the country or been arrested. There were even rumours that Ms Siddique and her sister Sobaha — until recently chief surgeon at the 400-bed Afghan army hospital and a two-star general — had

been killed. The sisters, the proud daughters of Afghan royalty, do not answer the door to strangers.

Although Sobaha has not been permitted to work, medical personnel generally are exceptions to the ban on working women. An estimated 150,000 women held jobs in Kabul before the Taliban came in, many earning the sole income for households which had lost all their men to the war. In recent weeks the Taliban have softened somewhat, allowing women to take part in income-generating schemes run by aid organisations.

Ms Habibi likens the repression of women to the backlash that followed the outlawing of the veil in Kabul by the modernising King Amanullah in 1928. The king,

who scandalised tribal chiefs by escorting his wife to parties, was overthrown a year later, and it was more than 30 years before women re-entered public life.

All three women are certain they will survive this latest upheaval. Ms Habibi is proud to have stayed on the air since 1961. Seventeen years ago today, she had just finished reading the 7pm bulletin when she heard gunfire outside the studio, and watched a guard slump to his feet. Soldiers burst into the room; the Russian invasion of Afghanistan had begun, and

Ms Habibi was lined up with the other broadcasters for an entire, terrifying night. The Siddique sisters argue that the Taliban strictures owe little to the true spirit of Islam. Together, they have de-

ferred the religious police who deliver instant punishment to women who show their faces in public. Unlike all but the very elderly and very poor in Kabul, who move out in *chadereh*, the sisters venture out with shawls covering their heads, but not their faces.

"When women go to Mecca they show their faces. Chade-  
ref has nothing to do with Islam or Afghan culture. Our only custom is to wear a large shawl," says Sadia. "If someone hits me even once I will hit them back four times. I even picked up a stone once to throw at one of the Taliban."

She maintains that Islam, properly interpreted, provides women with all rights. "If the Taliban carry on like this in the future we can fight for women's rights through Islam."

That struggle must wait. "Now is not the time because there is still war in Afghanistan and our enemies will be very quick to take advantage of that," Sobaha says. But she is hopeful. "No one knows what will happen. After every night there is a dawn and the future may hold new things."

## 'If someone hits me even once I will hit them back four times'

glory days of Ms Habibi's career: a glamour shot, with her long hair swirling down to her shoulders on the cover of the Voice of Pathans in 1976, and a picture of her, aged 16, in front of a large old-fashioned microphone.

She began her career in 1961, she has been quietly meeting Taliban officials, trying to win a return to the workplace on behalf of the radio's 300 female staff, certain the new regime will temper its views on working women. "Slowly, slowly, we have to be patient and hope they will change."

# Envoy freed in Peruvian siege

Jose Diaz-Lima in Lima

**L**FTWING guerrillas holding more than 100 hostages at the Japanese ambassador's residence in the Peruvian capital yesterday freed Guatemala's ambassador, José María Argueta.

The release apparently because of his ill health, leaves 103 people still captive. They are held by the Tupac Amaru guerrillas, who are demanding the release of several hundred colleagues from Peruvian jails. Two Peruvian ministers and four ambassadors are among those still held.

There were no reports of injuries. The International Red Cross, citing unconfirmed sources, said the explosion was caused by "an animal". The guerrillas say that they have mined the gardens to deter attack, and one theory was that a cat or dog triggered a landmine.

Some 10 guerrillas inside the building have an arsenal of arms, bullets and explosives. They have grenades at their waists and some freed hostages have even said they have explosive devices attached to a rip cord rigged up on their backs.

His closest advisers in the government palace. There are fears that the countries still inside might break rank after the release on Saturday of the Uruguayan ambassador, Tobare Bocalandro. The Tupac Amaru rebels freed Mr Bocalandro shortly after Montevideo authorities released two Peruvians suspected of belonging to the rebel group. Peru was seeking to extradite the two.

# Biggest Brands! Biggest Savings!

...WIDE RANGE OF 1997 DIARIES & PLANNERS IN STOCK... ALL AT GUARANTEED LOWEST PRICES...

**BRITAIN'S** OFFICE WORLD DELUXE OPERATORS CHAIR (Code 360-7717/702/703) Back rest adjustment Gas seat height adjustment Available in Pearl, Charcoal, Grey and Red. **SALE \$44.99** **SAVE 78% off** (From \$122.25)

**BIGGEST** VIRGIN DSHD 3.5" FORMATTED DISKS (Code 12-100) Double sided High density Guaranteed for life. **SALE \$6.59** **SAVE 33% off** (From \$9.85) **20 DISKS PLUS 2 FREE**

**OFFICE** REXEL POLYPROPYLENE A4 RING BINDER (Code 634-757) Available in assorted colours 2 ring mechanism. **SALE \$45p** **SAVE 55% off** (From \$100)

**SUPPLIES** AMSTRAD PPF600 PLAIN PAPER FAX MACHINE (Code 204-103) Telephone/answering machine interface 20 page document feeder Auto telephone/fax switch 12 one-touch and 62 abbreviated dial keys Ink film printing on plain paper 12 months on-site warranty. **SALE \$298.99** **SAVE 36% off** (From \$465.00)

**BLACK & WHITE PHOTOCOPIING** PANASONIC UF-S1 FAX/TAN (Code 209-917) Combined fax, telephone and answer machine Document feeder Fax transmission mode 25 number memory store Last number redial 12 months warranty. **SALE \$200.00** **SAVE 21% off** (From \$250.00)

**51 SUPERSTORES NATIONWIDE**  
Open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday,  
9am-6pm Saturday, 10.30am-4.30pm Sunday

CHRISTMAS DAY CLOSED BOXING DAY 10.30AM-4.30PM NEW YEAR'S EVE 8AM-6PM  
NEW YEAR'S DAY 8AM-6PM (EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW CLOSED)  
NORMAL TRADING HOURS APPLY ON ALL OTHER DAYS

**FREEPHONE 0800 5000 24**

**Office World**  
The No.1 Office Supplies Discount Superstore

**There's always more % off at Office World**



A man keeps vigil outside the embassy compound in Lima, where 103 hostages are held. PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT DALTON

## News in brief

**Hopes grow for signatures on Hebron deal within days**  
ISRAELIS and Palestinians say they are on the verge of a Hebron deal, with the signing expected before the new year and the withdrawal of Israeli troops by January 5. The upbeat assessments came as negotiators met yesterday to put the agreement in writing. "We had some good substantive meetings," said Martin Indyk, the United States ambassador to Israel. He said negotiations would continue at the weekend. The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, expected an agreement to be signed by New Year's Eve. He told a closed-door session of the Palestinian legislative council that an Israeli troop pullback from 80 per cent of Hebron would start a day after the signing and be completed by January 5.

An Israeli official confirmed the tentative timetable, saying the agreement could be signed by the heads of the two negotiating teams on Sunday and then presented to the Israeli and Palestinian cabinets for approval. He said Mr Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, would sign the accord later next week and redeployment could be completed by January 5. Mr Arafat also told the legislative council Mr Netanyahu had promised that a gradual withdrawal of Israeli troops from West Bank rural areas would start within six weeks of the signing. Mr Arafat had insisted on a specific timetable for the withdrawal as part of the Hebron deal. — AP.

**Convict eats cellmate**  
A SIBERIAN prisoner has been sentenced to death for a second time after he killed and tried to eat his cellmate while on death row, Interfax news agency reported yesterday.

During an argument in Barnaul's city prison in May, Andrei Maslich, aged 24, strangled the other man, cut out his liver and tried to boil it in a metal mug over a makeshift fire.

Maslich, who was convicted of his fourth murder, was given his first death penalty last year after he and another inmate strangled, cooked and ate a fellow prisoner.

On that occasion, he told the authorities he was bored and wanted to visit Moscow, where he thought he would be sent for psychiatric examinations. He told the Altai regional court that he committed the latest act of cannibalism in the hope that experts would declare him insane and he would not be executed for the first. — AP.

**Former nanny sues Netanyahu**  
BINYAMIN Netanyahu's disgruntled former nanny, sacked in July after burning the soup, is suing the Israeli prime minister and his wife Sara for more than \$22,000 in back pay, her lawyer said yesterday.

The South African-born Tanya Shaw, aged 21, said in a petition to a Jerusalem labour court that Mr and Mrs Netanyahu had failed to pay extra wages for overtime and for work on the sabbath during her six months of employment, as required by law.

These wages, with interest, amounted to 120,000 shekels (\$22,000), her lawyer, Moshe Zingel, said. The judge at the opening hearing ordered the Netanyahu family to respond to the petition within 45 days.

Mr Zingel said Ms Shaw's name had been tarnished by the episode and as a result she had been unable to find another job.

Ms Shaw revealed after her dismissal that Mrs Netanyahu was obsessed with cleanliness, had called her "a murderer" and thrown her out for burning soup.

The scandal was front-page news in the Israeli tabloids for days, embarrassing Mr Netanyahu a month after his election. — Reuter.

**Killer storm hits Malaysia**  
THE death toll of a tropical storm which hit eastern Malaysia on Christmas Day rose to 106 yesterday as rescuers began unearthing bodies pulled from rivers and from under debris.

Police said about 3,000 people were homeless after tropical storm Greg blew ashore in the state of Sabah from the South China Sea.

Sabah's police commissioner, Maizan Shari, said that only four of the bodies recovered had so far been identified. The death toll was expected to rise because about 100 people were still missing, he said.

The maritime rescue and co-ordination centre in Malaysia said the storm drove several ships into shallow waters in the South China Sea.

The worst-hit area was Keningau, 95 miles south of Sabah's capital Kota Kinabalu, where 102 bodies were found in rivers or under debris. — Reuter.

**Tight squeeze for 'Santa'**  
A MAN who tried to make a Santa-like entrance into a supermarket in Baltimore was found on Christmas morning stuck in the store's chimney.

Dwayne Terry, aged 33, was charged with attempted robbery after police, tipped off by an anonymous caller, found him lodged about 2ft down the chimney.

He told police he had been hungry and decided to climb down the store's chimney to get some food. — AP.

من الامم

# Crackdown on alcohol industry to raise revenue Yeltsin tightens his grip on the bottle

Natasha Aleva in Moscow

**P**RESIDENT Boris Yeltsin announced a big crackdown on Russia's huge alcohol industry yesterday to try to stem tax evasion and increase budget revenues.

Mr Yeltsin, who returned to the Kremlin this week after a long absence for heart bypass surgery, announced his decision after presiding over a meeting of the emergency tax commission, which seeks ways to improve tax collection.

"The state loses 2 trillion roubles [£220 million] per month because of the outrages in the alcohol market," Mr Yeltsin's chief of staff, Anatoly Chubais, said.

He said the moves were intended to "reinstate the state monopoly" of the alcohol market. However, the government would not be nationalising any of the hundreds of privately owned distilleries of vodka.

The government has empowered enforcement agencies to "radically toughen controls on the entire chain of production, from imports and distilleries ... to the retail trade," Mr Chubais said.

Russia desperately needs to increase its tax revenues to

begin paying millions of state workers who have gone months without salaries.

The lucrative alcohol market, which is full of tax loopholes, is an obvious target, but it is unclear whether the authorities can effectively implement the plan.

According to figures released last month, the gov-

ernment collected only 4 trillion roubles in excise taxes on alcoholic drinks in the first eight months of 1996 — less than half the target figure.

Vodka producers hailed the long-awaited move, which they hoped would benefit legitimate producers as well as the state.

"The state will get additional revenues, the overall quality will rise. Fewer people will get poisoned with bad vodka,"

Yarmoch of Spiritrom producers' association.

Alla Vdovenko, head of the

government's alcohol control authority, was sacked yesterday for failing to introduce proper controls.

Under the new, stricter controls, licensing will be centralised and regional governments will no longer be able to grant permission to make and sell alcohol.

Illegal alcohol imports often come to Russia via Ukraine and Belarus, officials said.

Russia and Belarus have an open border and large quantities of alcohol enter Russia without any taxes being paid.

Mr Chubais said Russia would send more customs officials to Ukraine to guard against illegal alcohol imports.

In the Soviet era, about a third of Russia's budget came from taxes on alcohol. The government lost control of the market in the recent economic havoc, causing the figure to drop sharply.

Government revenues for 1996 have been only 70 per cent of projections, leaving it desperately short of cash. Pension arrears are projected to reach 16 trillion roubles by the end of the year.

Mr Yeltsin described the situation as catastrophic and immoral and ordered the government to cover all pension arrears by next July, Mr Chubais said. — AP.



Elderly Russian women sell vodka on a Moscow street. Smugglers, moonshiners and bootleggers are estimated to cost the state £220 million a month. PHOTOGRAPH: DIMA KOPOTAYEV

# King's blunt message hits Belgium hard

Stephen Bates in Brussels

**F**OR once, it was a royal Christmas message with a bite. Belgians tuning in to watch King Albert II's Christmas Eve broadcast heard an extraordinarily blunt assessment of a true *Annus Horribilis* — probably the country's most tragic and disastrous since the second world war.

The Eton-educated King Albert, a rumpily, paunchy, pin-striped figure in his early sixties, called for national regeneration after a year of disasters which have shaken Belgians out of their complacency and called them to question the authority and competence of their institutions.

In barely coded language, the king questioned the integrity of ministers and officials: "We wish that all people in public positions of authority would identify with the population and consider themselves to be in its service. We want a society where a new type of responsible citizenship develops and everyone is involved. Everyone must play their part."

A series of events in 1996 has conspired to undermine national self-confidence. Even the banks nearly ran out of money after a series of robberies.

As Belgium faces up to its economic weakness in the run-up to European monetary union, the government has resorted to desperate measures, including selling the national billion reserves to try to reduce its enormous national debt and meet the criteria for entry to EMU in 1999.

Worse, government ministers have been accused of sleazy financial dealings and tax evasion. The deputy prime minister faced accusations — eventually dismissed by a parliamentary inquiry — of having sex with under-aged boys.

A regional minister has had to resign while investigations into similar allegations continue.

A former regional minister is in prison on charges of conspiring to assassinate the former deputy prime minister; other former ministers face corruption trials over arms deals.

But looming above all else has been the discovery of a paedophile ring in the southern city of Charleroi.

The arrest in August of Marc Dutroux, a 39-year-old builder and convicted paedophile, and the discovery of the bodies of four abducted girls buried in the gardens of his homes around Charleroi, exposed a dismal web of police incompetence and judicial negligence.

The revelation that he had allowed two eight-year-old girls, Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, to starve to death in a dungeon in the basement of one of his houses was swiftly followed by the admission that police had searched the property three times while the girls were alive and even heard children's voices but had not found them.

Outrage increased when it emerged that Dutroux had earlier been released after serving three years of a 19-year sentence for rape and abduction. The then minister of justice let him out against advice; the authorities did not supervise him after his release; and, when the abductions started, the police failed to investigate the known paedophile on their patch properly.

Little wonder therefore that King Albert's message was grim: "Christmas is traditionally a time of family happiness but this year we all still have in our hearts a deep wound that will not heal. The faces of Julie and Melissa ... and other missing children are engraved on our memories. This national tragedy continues to distress us deeply. We did not think such things could happen here, but it is the cruel truth. We must make sure they can never happen again."

The paedophile scandal crystallised a growing realisation that one of the qualities on which Belgians have prided themselves — to keep their linguistically divided country together — the elevation of compromise to an art form — has failed.

The division of spoils between the parties and the use of political patronage in all public appointments, including the police and judiciary, have created an entrenched system which has thrived on petty corruption, with little need to respond to public pressure.

# Fragile Pope cuts back Christmas engagements

Pontiff includes Rwanda, Burundi and atheists in his goodwill prayers. John Hooper in Rome reports

**T**HE POPE'S advancing age and increased frailty were again underlined at Christmas as his programme of engagements was severely reduced at the insistence of his doctors.

The 78-year-old pontiff, who left hospital in October after an operation for the removal of his appendix, said mid-night mass in the first hour of Christmas day at St Peter's basilica and delivered his traditional greetings from the balcony of the vast edifice later, at midday.

But he took no part in the Christmas morning mass which is a key event in the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar.

In an unusual gesture, he

included atheists in his messages of goodwill, telling the congregation of tens of thousands, which packed into St Peter's for midnight mass: "We pray for everyone today, Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers alike."

The service also made topical reference to worldwide concern about paedophile abuse. It included a succession of prayers, read in a number of languages by men and women from different countries.

One prayer, read in Tagalog, said: "Significantly, it was the prayer delivered in the Tagalog language of the Philippines, a country that has long

been a favourite destination of sex tourists.

Dwarfed by Bernini's towering altar canopy, the Baldachin, Pope John Paul looked all the more fragile during the stamina-sapping service which lasts an hour and 45 minutes.

On a couple of occasions he rocked backwards and forwards precariously on his heels as he stood in prayer, and the Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations, the grey-haired Monsignor Piero Martin, stepped up to his aid.

But the Pope's voice was strong, and all the more so after he had rested in preparation for the delivery of his message *Urbi et Orbi* (to the city and the world).

This was a particularly important test as the latest round of alarms over the Pope's health began a year ago when, in front of millions of television viewers around the world, he cut short his Christmas greetings and stepped back off the balcony in evident distress.

This year there were no such dramas, but a chair had been placed beside him.

He used this address, his most widely heard of the year, to call for peace, particularly in the Great Lakes region of Africa. A tragedy was unfolding amid the "general indifference of the international community," the Pope said.

"Thousands and thousands of people — our brothers, our sisters — are wandering, prey to fear, illness and hunger, unable to experience the joy of Christmas," he said. No one could truly enjoy Christ-

mas while "this tragedy, this scandal" continued.

The Pope included greetings spoken in the languages of Burundi and Rwanda among those in which he wished the world a happy Christmas.

In an apparent departure from his prepared text, he said: "Rwanda, Burundi; Rwanda, Burundi. We pray a lot for those two countries."

He was due to leave the Vatican yesterday to spend a long weekend at his country residence in Castelgandolfo, southeast of Rome. His next public engagement is on New Year's Eve.

His health began deteriorating in 1992, when doctors removed a tumour from his colon that was starting to turn malignant. The following year, he was taken to hospital with a dislocated shoulder and in 1994 he underwent hip surgery.



The Pope delivers his Urbi et Orbi message from St Peter's on Christmas Day. Last year, ill health forced him to cut short his speech

Having snubbed a Christmas Day pantomime in protest at unfair criticism, England produced a pantomime of their own. Sadly, it failed to raise a single laugh. It must be protested at this juncture that the recklessness of the England team is seriously undermining the confidence of the media.

## Sport96 cover story

**Local Mini Cabs**  
**FREE PHONE**  
**0800-21-31-44**  
 (We pay for your call)  
**CARS BIKES VANS**

**OR insure with Eagle Star**  
 and get a free courtesy car  
 after an accident.

Interested? Call  
**0800 333 800**

**EAGLE STAR Direct**

Courtesy car is provided when repairs are done by an Eagle Star authorised repairer. Service is available for all comprehensive customers, and for Third Party, Fire and Theft customers where damage is fire or theft related. Available in mainland Britain, Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Phone for a free motor insurance quote weekdays 9am-5pm, Saturday 9am-2pm. Not available in Northern Ireland.

## News in brief

### Turkey quizzes police officers

Turkey's interior minister, Meral Aksener, has suspended seven police officers over their alleged links with organised crime, the ministry said yesterday.

The seven, from units in central and southern Turkey, are being questioned about claims that they made no effort to arrest a gangster, Mehmet Ozcan, and that they aided and abetted convicted criminals. — Reuters.

### Prison transfer

A Pakistan court yesterday transferred Asif Ali Zardari, ousted prime minister Benazir Bhutto's husband, to jail from police custody after he complained of "mental torture" by police. An accused person held in jail cannot be interrogated, legal sources said. — Reuters.

### Algiers bomb

A car bomb exploded near a police station in a crowded area of Algiers yesterday, killing at least seven people and wounding at least 70 others, French state radio reported. — AP.

### Troops move in

Hundreds of Indonesian troops moved into the town of Taskamaya in western Java yesterday after an estimated 5,000 rioters, incensed by reports that police had beaten a religious teacher and two students, set fire to commercial buildings and churches, residents and military officials said. — Reuters.

### King Fahd libel

A Beirut court yesterday sentenced the owner of pro-Libyan weekly magazine Al-Kifah al-Arabi and its director to 60 days each in jail for libelling Saudi Arabia's King Fahd. Judicial sources said. They were each also fined \$200,000. — Reuters.

### Li Peng in Russia

The Chinese prime minister, Li Peng, arrived in Russia yesterday for a meeting today with President Yeltsin. — AP.

### Army blamed

Burundi's defence ministry has ordered the arrest of an army officer after deciding an army unit was responsible for clashes in Kiziba earlier this month in which 79 civilians were killed, an army spokesman said yesterday. — Reuters.

**STAPLES**  
 The Office Superstore

**HUGE SAVINGS ON SOFTWARE**  
 SAVE UP TO **65%**

**PLUS 10% OFF ALL OTHER GAMES**  
 Hundreds of titles. Ask in store for details

**OPENING HOURS**  
 FRI 27TH 8-8 SAT 28TH 9-6 SUN 29TH 11-5 MON 30TH 8-8  
 NEW YEARS EVE 8-5 NEW YEARS DAY 9-5

**FOR YOUR NEAREST STAPLES CALL 0990 55 66 22**

ABINGDON	CARDIFF	EDINBURGH	NOTTINGHAM	WARRINGTON
BARNSTAPLE	CHATHAM	GLASGOW	SHEFFIELD	WEST BROMWICH
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON
BIRMINGHAM	GLASGOW	LONDON	SOUTHAMPTON	WILMINGTON

**FREE DELIVERY**  
 ON ORDERS OVER £30 EX VAT EX VAT £35.95 INC VAT  
 TO PLACE YOUR ORDER CALL 0990 55 66 22

**0800 14 14 14**

**AMAZING OFFERS WHILE STOCKS LAST**

**WORMS**  
 SKU 220061  
**SAVE 65%**

**DUKE NUKEM 3D**  
 SKU 237263  
**SAVE 42%**

**TOMB RAIDER**  
 SKU 250316  
**SAVE 42%**

**STAPLES PRICE**  
**£9.99** INC VAT  
 £8.50 EX VAT  
 WAS £29.37 INC. VAT

**STAPLES PRICE**  
**£19.99** INC VAT  
 £17.91 EX VAT  
 WAS £34.99 INC. VAT

**STAPLES PRICE**  
**£19.99** INC VAT  
 £17.91 EX VAT  
 WAS £34.99 INC. VAT

**STAPLES**  
 The Office Superstore

ALL PRICES SHOWN ARE MEMBER PRICES. MEMBERSHIP IS FREE, INSTANT AND CAN BE ARRANGED BY VISITING OR TELEPHONING YOUR LOCAL STORE. (Orders under £30 ex. Vat £35.95 inc. Vat are subject to our delivery charge of £2.90 ex. Vat £3.41 inc. Vat) Next day delivery orders must be received by 4pm Monday to Friday and will deliver the next working day. Orders placed on Sunday will be delivered on Tuesday. All items are subject to availability. Every effort has been made to ensure that the prices and descriptions are correct at the time of going to press. However as manufacturers' specifications and prices can change, Staples reserves the right to alter or amend prices of offers without prior notification. © Staples UK and its associated companies are not responsible for reproduction without their permission.

Frankfurt church blast

# Suicide bomber 'was mentally ill'

Denis Staunton in Berlin

**T**HE suicide bomber who killed herself and two others in a Frankfurt church on Christmas Eve was a 49-year-old woman who had been receiving psychiatric treatment, German police said yesterday. Thirteen people were injured when two grenades strapped to the woman's abdomen exploded during a midnight service at a Protestant church in the working-class district of Sindlingen. Police believe the woman's motive for the act was personal rather than political or religious, and that she had not intended to kill anyone apart from herself. They dismissed a suggestion made by a Berlin radio station that she had been inspired by a film shown recently on German television in which a hostage-taker causes an explosion in a church. Police are still investigating how she acquired the two Eastern European-made gre-

nades that caused the explosion. "She completely underestimated the effect of the hand grenades," a police spokesman said. The woman, who looked younger than her 49 years and had long, dark hair and blue eyes, was identified after police released a photograph of her severed head. She had been separated from her husband and nine-year-old daughter for a year and under psychiatric supervision for a number of years. Police did not release her name, but said she had originally come from a district near Sindlingen and had lived on the other side of Frankfurt for the past year. The woman arrived at the church by public transport and slipped into a pew near the back shortly after the service began. Some worshippers noticed she continued to wear a heavy winter cape inside the church and that her face was partly concealed by a scarf. As the congregation began to sing a Christmas hymn, they heard a dull bang and

saw pieces of shrapnel and human flesh flying through the air. Many ran screaming from the church and, within minutes, dozens of ambulances and fire trucks converged on the scene. The church's pastor, who is due to retire next week, and worshippers were treated for shock. Two elderly sisters seated next to the bomber were killed instantly by the blast and a 12-year-old girl was among those taken to hospital. The girl's condition stabilised yesterday but her mother remains critically ill. Mourners gathered yesterday at the little stone church to pray for the dead and injured. Small candles burnt next to bunches of flowers left by well-wishers outside the church and a hand-written notice announced the special memorial service. "Christmas has brought us more questions than answers this year. We have injuries among us in body and spirit. But the injuries among us will bind us together," Reverend Bernd Wangerin said.



Mourners light candles outside the Frankfurt church where three people were killed on Christmas Eve

PHOTOGRAPH: AXEL SEIDEMANN

## Irish magic fails to do the trick back home

In the first report of two, John Palmer looks at Dublin's legacy for the new EU presidency

**I**F THE plaudits of its European Union partners could be converted into votes at home, the Irish government would be facing the political future with confidence. Ireland will hand over the EU presidency to the Netherlands on New Year's Day to warm tributes from the rest of the EU, but John Bruton's coalition, beset by domestic political scandals, faces defeat at the polls next year. There is a time when international acclaim for Ireland's running of the EU presidency impressed Irish voters. But in a country confident enough now to tread the prospect of yet another Eurovision song contest triumph, domestic political popularity is harder to come by. The praise showered on the Irish government's handling of the EU's complex, and at times explosive, affairs has come from Europhile and Eurosceptic alike. "I truly believe the Irish presidency was of exceptional quality," John Major declared after the Dublin EU summit this month. Bonn, Rome, Stockholm, even Paris, echoed the sentiments. The six-month Irish presidency was simply keeping the show on the road. Given the tensions generated both by the planned move to a single currency in 1999 and by the acrimonious debate about a new EU treaty, this was no simple matter. But the Irish have pushed both projects forward at a pace which has satisfied most European integrationists, while averting a premature crisis within the divided British government. That international praise now so unmoves the Irish electorate reflects in part the fact that the country is riding an exceptional economic wave, enjoying the fastest rate of growth in western Europe. Its industrial boom is transforming Ireland's social landscape. There is a downside — not least a burgeoning crime rate — but any lingering national inferiority complex is fast disappearing. Ireland is expected to overtake the per capita income of Britain by the end of the decade. It will almost certainly qualify to join the first wave of countries into monetary union in 1999, whatever the British decide to do. "For us progress in meeting the Maastricht criteria for the single currency has clearly been shown to be the best way to generate growth and jobs. Our record deserves close study by others," the Labour finance minister, Ruairi Quinn, said. Little wonder that a new generation of young Irish Europeans — as most see themselves — is confident about its place in the world. There is even genuine sympathy for the plight of the British, seen across the Irish Sea as being locked into a Europhobic spiral of intervention and decline. The Irish presidency draft treaty on monetary union has been accepted by all 15 states as the only practical basis for concluding the Maastricht treaty review negotiations. Some key reforms, such as the greater use of majority voting, will have to be dealt with by the Dutch presidency, but in areas such as immigration, frontier controls and the fight against international crime, the draft treaty clearly nudges the EU further down the road of sovereignty-sharing and political union. Ireland brokered crucial agreements on a single-currency stability pact, on the legal status of the proposed euro and on a new exchange rate mechanism. The Dutch will tie up the legal details, but EMU is going to happen thanks to the Irish. The Irish presidency also defused — at least temporarily — bitter rows about fishing policy and the ERM crisis. Managing the EU's affairs and giving a lead on Europe's expanding foreign policy role have stretched the Irish government's resources to the limit. The Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, who spearheaded the Irish presidency, knows the easy part is over. Far more difficult will be to rally his Labour Party's disaffected voters and an increasingly beleaguered coalition before the general election. *Next: Prospects for the Dutch EU presidency*

# 20% OFF SELECTED KITCHENS\*



11 Unit Aviemore Kitchen  
WAS £1,253  
NOW £975

**HALF PRICE DISHWASHER.** When you spend over £2,000\*\* on any kitchen and kitchen appliances you will qualify for a half price Candy dishwasher†† worth £425.

**BUY NOW, PAY NOTHING FOR SIX MONTHS.** Pay in full or take credit in 6 months. 36 monthly repayments of £37.45 — total amount repayable £1,348.20 (24.9% APR VARIABLE).

- 11 UNIT KITCHEN CONSISTS OF:**
- WALL UNITS: 300mm STANDARD WALL
  - 3 x 500mm STANDARD WALL
  - 600mm STANDARD CORNER WALL
  - 600mm STANDARD BRIDGING UNIT
  - BASE UNITS: 500mm HIGH LINE BASE
  - 1000mm HIGH LINE BASE
  - 500mm DRAWER BASE
  - 1000mm HIGH LINE CORNER BASE
  - 400mm OVEN HOUSING
  - 2 x 3m CO-ORDINATING PLINTHS

# HOMEBASE

SAINSBURY'S HOUSE & GARDEN CENTRES

HOMEBASE KITCHENS NOW IN STOCK IN SELECTED STORES. TELEPHONE 0161-200 0200 FOR YOUR NEAREST SHOWROOM.  
MONDAY-THURSDAY 8AM-8PM • FRIDAY 8AM-7PM • SATURDAY 8AM-8PM • SUNDAY 10AM-4PM • CHRISTMAS EVE AND NEW YEAR'S EVE 8AM-4PM • BOXING DAY AND NEW YEAR'S DAY 10AM-6PM

### Informative:

With effect from 2 January 1997 the following interest rates will apply:

Premier Cheque Account		
Overdraft Rate	%pa	%EAR
Agreed overdraft for balances up to £10,000	9.00%	9.51%

Mortgage		
	From	To
All loan amounts	6.49% pa	6.74% pa

Equity Release Loan		
	From	To
All loan amounts	6.49% pa	6.74% pa

First Direct		
	From	To
All loan amounts	6.49% pa	6.74% pa

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. Member HSBC Group.

مكتبة ابن الامم

The issues

South Korea's trade unions fear the country's new labour law will lead to huge lay-offs, while businesses say flexibility is needed to compete against foreign companies.

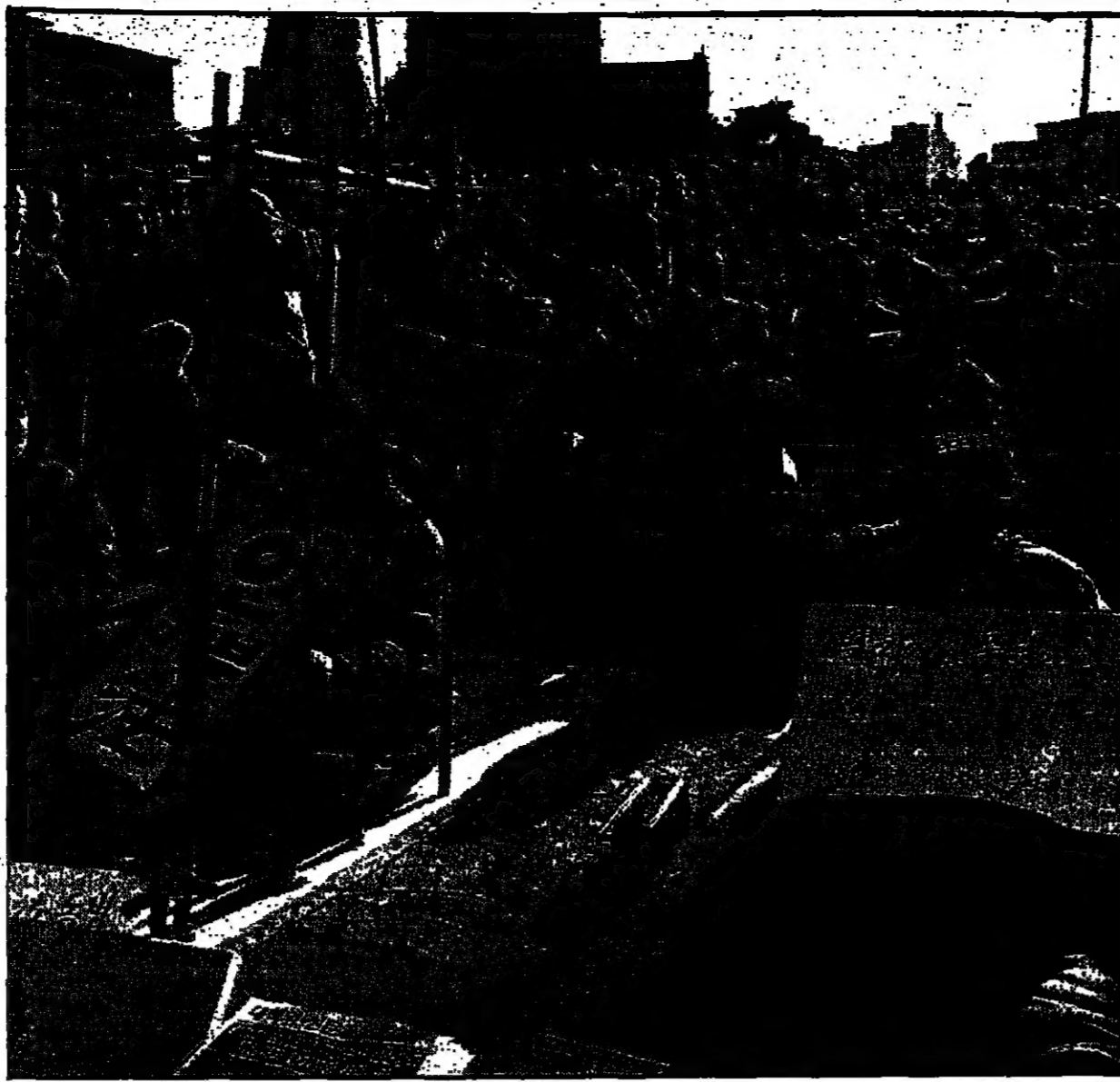
The new law:

● Gives businesses greater freedom to lay off workers and set working hours. Currently, a supreme court ruling is needed before companies can cut their work force.

● Bans formation of new umbrella trade union federations until 2000.

● Lifts the ban on multiple trade unions at a work site, but not until 2000.

● Allows teachers to form unions — in two years.



South Korean workers lock themselves in a makeshift cell during a protest in Seoul yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: APH YOUNG-JOON

Nationwide protests paralyse car industry giants

New laws trigger S Korean strike

Sang-han Choo in Seoul

TENS of thousands of South Korean workers went on strike yesterday to protest against a new labour law passed in a secret early morning vote by ruling party MPs, without any opposition members present.

By yesterday afternoon, 150,000 workers from 82 sites had joined the country's first organised national strike, bringing the country's car industry — South Korea is the world's sixth largest car producer — to a standstill.

Another bill increased the powers of South Korea's chief spy agency, a move that opposition MPs fear could be used to stifle political dissent.

Yesterday's strike closed many leading export plants, including South Korea's top car maker, Hyundai, and the world's largest shipyard, Hyundai Heavy Industries.

Workers at South Korea's second largest shipyard, Daewoo Shipbuilding and Heavy Machinery, said they would strike today.

South Korea's car companies produce 10,000 cars a day, 4,000 of which are destined for overseas markets.

The ruling party said it had to act unilaterally because opposition MPs, who do not have enough votes to stop the bills from becoming law, had blocked the assembly from convening last week.

Kwon Young-Gil, chief of the Federation of Democratic Unions, and several other union leaders have shaved their heads in protest at the laws and have begun a hunger strike in a tent pitched in the grounds of Seoul's Myungdong Cathedral.

A nationwide strike would be a further blow to South Korea's ailing economy, which is expected to register a record \$12.5 billion trade deficit this year, twice that of last year. Stock prices have plunged to the lowest level in three years.

Jail term brings 'sky rage' man down to earth

Richard Thomas in Washington

A MAN who assaulted an air steward in a fit of "sky rage" has been jailed for four years, in a case reflecting airline concerns that violent or abusive passenger behaviour is on the rise.

"This is a wake-up call," said Dan Drake, a spokesman for the United States attorney's office in Savannah, Georgia, where the trial was held.

Flight staff unions, which have conducted a month-long campaign to highlight the dangers faced by cabin crews, welcomed the tough sentence handed down to Gary Lougee, aged 40.

James Goodman, from the Association of Professional Flight Attendants, said the strict sentence "shows that tolerance for this kind of behaviour is becoming slimmer — as it should".

An intoxicated Lougee shoved the chief stewardess on a USAir flight from Savannah to Charlotte against a cabin door after being refused more drinks, the court heard.

Campaigners said the case highlights the increase in sky rage cases, fuelled by busier airports and aircraft, and the limited booze at high altitude.

"Most passengers don't realise that one drink counts as two up there," said Ms Goodman. In another case, a drunken passenger attacked a steward because the steaks had run out.

The British aviation industry is pushing for greater legal controls over behaviour in international airspace.

David Stempier, a Washington-based passengers' lawyer, blames cut-backs by cost-conscious carriers to in-flight meals, which make for empty stomachs.

On at least two airlines — American and Alaska — cabin crew are equipped with plastic handcuffs to restrain excitable customers.

Peter North, at the British Airlines Representatives, said: "In one sense we've been lucky. No one has opened an emergency door at 30,000ft and downed an aircraft. But something could happen, and a plane could be lost."

In the US a number of high-profile cases have led to tougher prosecutions by government lawyers. Last autumn, on a United Airlines flight from Buenos Aires to New York, a wealthy investment banker, Gerard Finne, ran amok in the presence of the president of Portugal and the Argentinean foreign minister, pouring drink over himself and creating an unmanageable scene on the business class drinks trolley.

UN pact to tackle spread of deserts

Owen Bennett Jones in Geneva

AN international agreement designed to reverse the desertification of arid land after two decades of deterioration became legally binding yesterday.

"In many countries the productivity of the soil is rapidly diminishing," said Arbo Diallo, of the secretariat for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. "People have to cultivate more and more to get less and less of a harvest."

The UN estimates that desertification threatens food and water shortages for more than 250 million people living in surrounding arid or semi-arid land.

Robert Ryan, a former diplomat who led the United States delegation to the Rio Earth Summit, said many of those who asked about living on drylands in countries such as Chad and Burkina Faso have had to abandon traditional lifestyles.

Biodiversity is also threatened: drylands provide habitats for wildlife and are estimated to supply the ingredients for a third of the plant-derived drugs on the US market.

Historically, drylands have recovered easily after long droughts, but today a combination of over-cultivation, deforestation and poor irrigation practices has led to economic productivity in some areas being lost more quickly.

New social trends such as over-population, the decline in nomadic lifestyles, unregulated access to land and refugee crises will also make tackling desertification a difficult task.

Developed countries have been reluctant to commit resources, fearing that the problem will be a constant drain on their finances.

Specific measures to stop desertification include introducing drought-resistant crops and encouraging sustainable forestry practices. A successful scheme in Mali handed over public land to specific communities so that they had an interest in improving its productivity.

A Greenpeace activist from Tunisia, Gulzani Hanoum, said the convention lacks resources. "I fear we are not going to solve the desertification problem."

B&Q SALE advertisement featuring various home appliances and tools with prices and savings. Includes items like vacuum cleaners, power tools, and lighting. Text: "Great Offers right around the Store." MARIA DONALD, Sales Assistant, NEW B&Q IRVINE NOW OPEN.

Continuation of the B&Q advertisement, showing more products and their prices. Includes items like lawnmowers, garden tools, and power tools. Text: "A BIGGER CHOICE • A BETTER PRICE".

attle  
n loses ha  
viewers  
six years

Tomorrow: Cleanliness code in the world of chips

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Bosses' pay rises fastest

Director-worker gap is 4 per cent wider, says TUC

Alan Jones

THE GAP between the pay of leading directors and their workers has grown by 4 per cent over the past year, a new report showed yesterday.

GAP, claims that Greenbury's efforts, which followed the outcry over "fat cat" salaries, has had no impact in curbing rising differentials between the boardroom and the shop floor.

Its survey of 1,300 directors' earnings showed huge variations, ranging from a 300 per cent rise for the chief executive of BSKyB to a 97.5 per cent pay cut for a director of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

over the past two years. Nineteen directors made over £1 million each from exercising share options this year, says the report.

More than 150,000 finance jobs could be axed in the next five years, the industry's leading union warned today, writes Dominic Walsh.

Insurance jobs are most immediately at risk because of mergers and the proliferation of direct selling operations, said the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU).

American Notebook

Clinton puzzles over pensions



Mark Tran

ONE OF the sternest challenges facing President Bill Clinton during his second term is what to do with social security, the US's most comprehensive social programme and one of its most successful social experiments.

verted to personal accounts, and it would be up to individuals to invest in a wide range of financial instruments. Under this plan, nest eggs could end up very different to each other.

Nearly all American workers participate in social security, which encompasses public pensions, disability insurance and other benefits. Ninety-six out of 100 paid jobs are covered, and nearly everyone can anticipate drawing social security benefits in one form or another upon retirement.

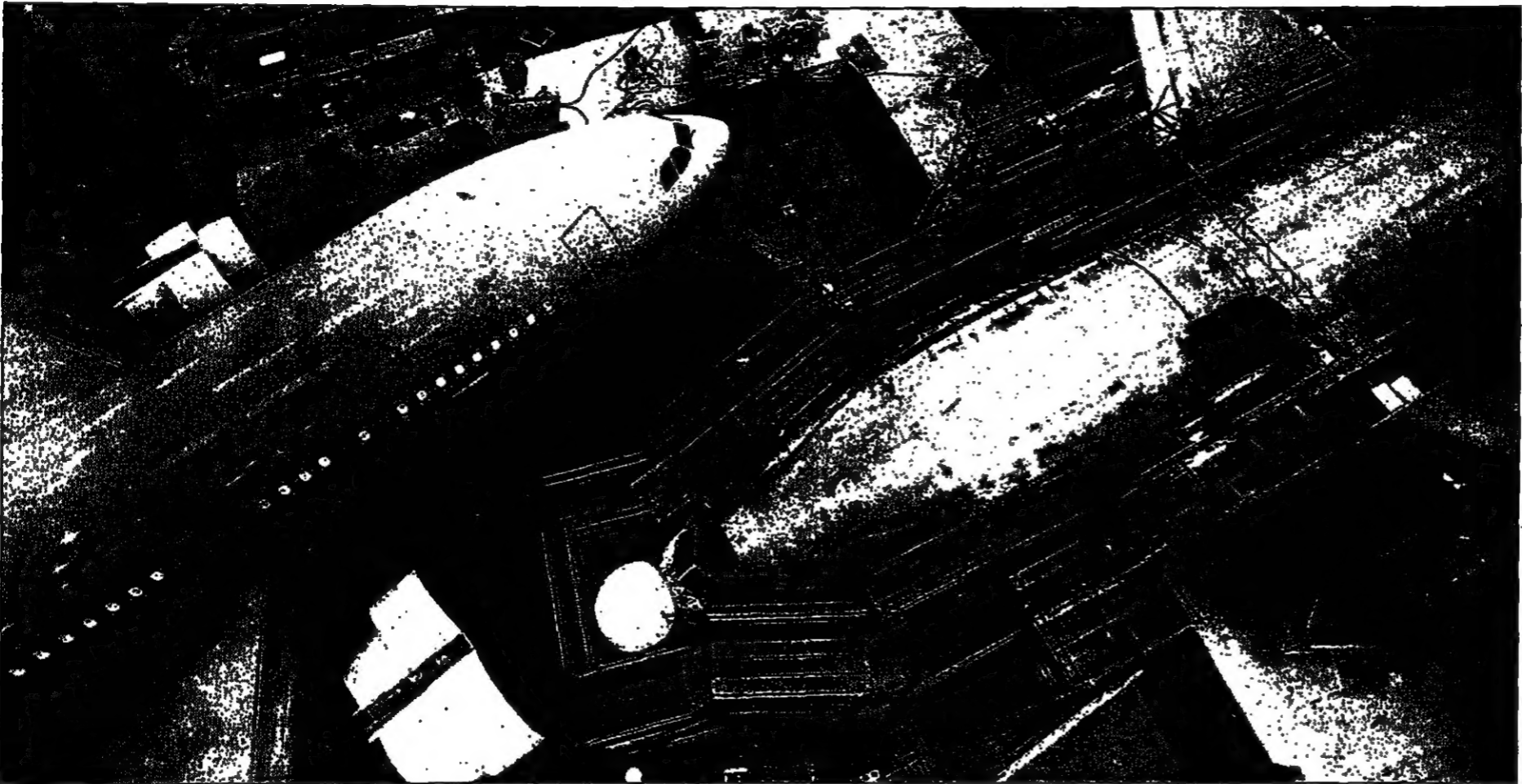
But that spirit of community could fade dramatically if President Clinton adopts a recommendation from some members of an advisory commission appointed in 1994 to look at social security.

The 13-member commission was asked to consider a problem similar to that facing governments in Europe and Japan: that caused by the reduction of the number of workers in proportion to the number of retired people.

In the US, by 2020, three workers will be supporting each beneficiary. By 2030, the system could begin to pay out more than it collects. It will be time to spend the surplus accruing now, when the relatively small group of people born during the Depression retire and the baby-boomers continue to pay social security taxes.

There are other options, none of them any easier politically. A 2.2 per cent increase in payroll tax, on top of the current 12.4 per cent paid by employers and employees, would solve the entire long-range problem. But few politicians have the stomach to raise such taxes.

THE REAL PICTURE/Aviation pioneer hopes new international airport will give a lift to beleaguered maintenance division. Photograph: Don McPhee/Words: Geoffrey Gibbs



FROM the earliest days of wood and canvas biplanes, through the production frenzy of the war years to the mould-breaking supersonic achievements of Concorde, Filton has been at the centre of British aircraft production.

On Tuesday Northern dramatically lost its fight to hold off a £782 million bid from US power company GE Electric. It is the fourth REC to be taken over by a US firm.

lines from as far afield as Egypt and Australia - flown into Filton for heavy servicing work to be carried out.

company has just landed an order to convert a further 10 second-hand A300s for a US leasing company.

in two - the zero engines becoming part of Rolle-Royce, the aircraft business going on to form part of what became British Aerospace.

been a crucial feature of the site as a whole. Now seriously under-used, it is a hefty overhead for BAE's loss-making maintenance and conversion business. Partly to ease that burden, the company wants to establish a commercial international airport on the airfield site.

Predator grabs Northern Electric

Celia Weston Industrial Correspondent

ONLY two of the original 12 privatised regional electricity companies (RECs), Southern and Yorkshire, remain independent, after Northern Electric fell into the hands of an American predator.

On Tuesday Northern dramatically lost its fight to hold off a £782 million bid from US power company GE Electric. It is the fourth REC to be taken over by a US firm.

Shareholders' leader urges hasty exit from Costain

Tony May

THE board of Costain, the troubled construction group, is in for a rough ride at today's extraordinary general meeting.

Firing powers rejected

Celia Weston Industrial Correspondent

EMPLOYERS have rejected Government plans to create a two-tier system of employment protection by giving small firms greater powers to fire staff.

protection from unfair dismissal could create recruitment problems for small firms and potentially sour relations between management and workers, he said.

the size of firm in which they work." Alternatives to the Government proposal included arbitration and conciliation, Dr Peters said.

Labour energy spokesman John Battle last night condemned "merger mania" in the electricity industry. "This multi-billion-pound spending spree proves how profitable these companies have become under weak and ineffective Tory regulation," he said.

Shareholders will probably be bidding farewell to chief executive Alan Lovell, who has resigned but will stay on until a successor is found.

Costain was already well into its decline when Mr Lovell joined as finance director in 1993. It made a loss that year of £323 million, but its shares - worth £22 at their peak in the late 1980s - were still worth £4 each. When he announced his resignation earlier this month the shares stood suspended at just 47p.

Guardian Crossword No 20,845

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 1. Self the lot! (7), 2. There's evidence of a leak - read the paper (7), 3. The German includes services and repairs (5), 4. Fruit popular as missiles (9), 5. The person checking prices, not forms (9), 6. To take only a tiny amount, shows sense (5), 7. Interrogate cook (5), 8. No longer an individual to follow, that's clear (9), 9. Study before race meeting (9), 10. A dance where some university men turned on another (5).

Set by Crispa

- 21 This could well lead to a wedding (5)
22 Slope open revolt - any-way holds off for a time (9)
23 Draw a circle around "taetrial", plainly amused (5)
24 Returning thanks in the evening, having enjoyed dinner? (5)
25 Spiced rope - it's seen as the answer (7)
26 Often drilled out to house a winder (7)
27 Caught the second involved in a racket (7)
28 Learns a new way to produce a magazine (7)
29 Puts up with egghead in the organisation (8-2)
30 Value soft grain (5)
31 Groom about to be committed to prison (5)
32 Sleek? Then call our solutions line on 0800 333 333. Cash cost 50p per minute Mon-Fri, 6am-9pm, and 45p per minute at all other times. Service supplied by AT&T

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page.